

A  
Conference  
WITH A  
THEIST  
PART III.

WHEREIN

- I. The Ancient Predictions concerning our Blessed Saviour.
- II. The Lives and Actions of Christ and His Apostles.
- III. The Doctrines of the Christian Religion

*Are Vindicated from the Objections of the  
Incredulous.*

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By William Nicholls, D D.

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LONDON: Printed by S. Budge, for  
E. Whitlock, near Stationers-Hall, 1698.

C1301.4.5-  
~~1949~~



Francis Bernard

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TO THE  
Right Reverend Father  
in GOD

J O H N  
L O R D B I S H O P  
O F  
CHICHESTER.

My Lord,

I Make bold to beg Your Lordships  
Protection to these Papers, that  
are designed for the *Vindication* of our  
*Holy Religion*, which it is become the  
Fashion so much in this unhappy Age  
to Oppose. I am not insensible of the  
many *Imperfections* which this *Perfor-*  
*mance* abounds with, and therefore I  
beg leave to Skreen my self under the  
Umbrage of so Great and so Good a  
Friend; who, as He best understands

## *The Epistle*

what is amiss or defective in it, so I am sure He does abound with that *Candor* and *Kindness*, that He will make the best Construction of it. You, my Lord, who have so strenuously Defended the *Truths of Christianity* Your self, will not be wanting to Protect those of weaker Abilities, who are engaged on that side; and any *Defender* of that *Holy Religion*, may reasonably expect to find a kind Acceptance at Your Hands, who have always shewn so great a Concern for, and are so Eminent a Light and Example in It: An *Example of Christianity*, which is beyond all Defences of it, and so excellently imitating That of our *Blessed Lord, Who went about doing Good*. How much Your whole Life, my Lord, has answered this Character, those numbers which have been Obligated by Your kind Assurances can Testify, and the constant Troubles you have always undergone, in procuring Advantages to Your Friends, whil'st  
You

## *Dedicatory.*

You have neglected them as to Your self. I know, my Lord, to mention this to You, will be somewhat Ungrateful, considering the great Modesty and Humility, and the Taciturness of all Your Charitable Acts; but yet, for the Interest of Religion, I have made bold to make use of Your Name at the Enterance of this Book, to let the Unbelievers see, that *Christianity* can Glory in such Eminent Members, whose Practice does recommend it as effectually as their Writings, whilst the Incredulous do take up only with such fanciful Principles of Morality and Airy Talk, as have no influence upon their Lives at all. Pardon, my Lord, this Boldness, and be pleased to accept my Bounden Thanks for Your many Favours, which have been, in the Experience of many Years, received by,

My LORD,

*Your most Dutiful, most Obliged,  
and most Humble Servant,  
Will. Nicholls.*

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TO THE  
READER.

Courteous Reader,

**I** Must Beg your Pardon, that I have not  
Finished the Conference in this Third  
Part, as I thought to have done. I am sen-  
sible I have fell under that Censure of Horace :

—————Amphora capit,  
Institui currente Rota cur Urceus exit ?

All the Excuse I am able to make, is, That  
if I had Concluded with This, I must have  
left out several Things material in the Dispute,  
or have swelled this Part to an Unproportion-  
able Bulk with the rest; both which I have  
been Advised against. Therefore, I have con-  
cluded to Treat of the Authority and Style of  
the Sacred Books, and the Excellency and  
Reasonableness of the Christian Religion,  
seperately, in the Fourth Part, which will spee-  
dily be Published.

# Conference

WITH A

# THEIST.

## PART. III.

*Credentius: Philologus.*

**I**T was now the declining Time of the Year, and the *Summer* was well nigh spent, when in a Morning which was as Curious and Delightfom, as Poetical Fancies are wont to describe it; *Philologus* had a mind betimes to take the Air, as well to receive the pleasant Refreshments of so

fine a Day, as to enjoy the Satisfaction of a Solitary Walk, which would the better Entertain his Studious Thoughts. From the back part of his House he had a Row of Trees, which led down directly to the Rivers side, along which, for the space of almost a Mile, Nature had thrown up a curious green Bank, some-what resembling an Artificial Terrace; which adapting it self to the natural winding of the River, did afford at the same time a very agreeable Prospect, and a delicious Walk. *Philologus* had no sooner come to the Rivers side, but he espies at a distance, upon the same Bank, *Credentius*, with a Book in his Hand, walking softly and Reading. *Philologus* with more than ordinary haste makes up towards him, whom when he came pretty near, he Accosts in this manner.

*Phil.* O my dear *Catechist*, good Morrow to you. I find your Divinity is up before our Humanity. I am afraid these ill-natur'd Fathers, *Credentius*, will not let you either Eat or Sleep.

*Cred.* Good Morrow to you, kind Sir. I find both Morning and Evening you are in a pleasant Vein, and that you can make Merry with your Friends as soon almost as you are up. I assure you, Sir, my Study seldom spoils my Stomach, or hinders my  
Repose;



Repose; and this Book I have in my hand, is none of those Formidable Fathers you are so scared at. It is a Book wrote by a Foreign Divine, a very Ingenious and Learned Man; it is Monsieur *Le Clerk's Causes of Incredulity*; wherein he has handsomly shewn that the Christian Religion is in no ways to blame, as not affording sufficient Reasons of its Credibility, but that the Gentlemen of your way are in the fault, who carry such Vices or Prejudices within your selves, as do estrange you from that admirable Religion, which otherways you could have no Exception against. I will not trouble you to give a particular Abstract of that excellent Book; I shall only recommend it to your diligent Perusal, which I doubt not, will afford you considerable Advantage, and will save us both some Words in the progress of our Conference, if you think fit, that we shall proceed therein. And if you will be so kind to accept it, the Book is at your Service.

*Phil.* I thank you Sir, for your Present, and for your sake I will give it a careful Reading. But in the mean time I must beg a little more of *Credentius* his Tutorage, if he has any Thoughts of making a Christian of me; but truly I think I have got such weighty Arguments to urge against your

Religion, that if you would but lay aside your Prejudice and Bigottry, I should not despair of making you an Infidel. Hitherto we have had only some little Skirmishes with you, and have made only Attacks upon the Out-works of Christianity, but now you must expect that we shall Assault the very Heart and Vitals of it. Though the World should not be Eternal, nor *Moses* his History of the Creation and Fall ridiculous; though Natural Religion should be a less perfect Rule of Morals, and Prophecie not Enthusiasm, nor Christ's Satisfaction and Intercession subject to the seeming Absurdities; yet if there be reason to suspect the Grounds of Christianity, and if I can make out that the Proofs which it pretends to are weak and shallow, that the Sincerity of the first Propagators of it is to be questioned, that the Body of its Doctrines is contrary to Reason and common Sense, and those Books which are said to be of Divine Inspiration, cannot be thought to be wrote by Men of good Understanding; I say, if I can make out all this, I hope I may have the Liberty to be an Unbeliever still; but if you have the luck to Convince me, *Credentius*, I will assure you, your Religion shall be mine. And indeed it will be my great Honour to Subscribe to his Opinion, which



Part III. *with a Theist.* 5

which in every thing else, besides Religion, I would blindly follow.

*Cred.* I pray God give that Issue to our Endeavours; not that I am fond of the Honour of a Victory over so great an Adversary as *Philologus*, but that you may be delivered from the danger of these ill Opinions, and that the Example of your Conversion may draw in (as I doubt not but it will) a Swarm of other little retailing Unbelievers, who do pin their Infidelity upon your Sleeve.

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*Of the Authority of Scripture :*

AND FIRST,

*Of the Predictions of CHRIST.*

*Phil.* **B**UT to spend no more time in Preamble, that we may make an end of our Dispute this Day, I will tell you into what Method I design to range the Objections I shall confront your Religion with. I now come in order to speak to the Authority of the Scriptures; and all that I shall say upon this Subject I shall re-

duce to these Two General Heads ; Speaking first of the Subject Matter contained in these two Books : And Secondly, of the Books themselves, their Style, Reputed Authors, and the like. I shall not go about to take to Task all the Books of the Old Testament under the First Head, but confine my self only to some particulars of the New : As *the Ancient Pretended Predictions of the Messias, the History of the Lives of Christ and his Apostles, and the supposed Miracles done by them, and the Doctrines they Preached.* I shall begin with the Predictions of the Messias.

Now these, which many of you Christians take to be strong Proofs of your Religion, I look upon to be the greatest Weaknesses in Christianity. For there are many places of the Old Testament which you quote for Prophecies of Christ, which bear no more Relation to Him, than if you Capped as many Verses out of *Homer* or *Virgil*. Nay *Sicelides Muse*, &c. is worth a hundred Passages to this purpose out of *Daniel* or *Haggai*. And yet this *Cumæan* Prophecy is all but Fancy too. You make a mighty stir with God's threatening the Serpent, in the third of *Genesis* ; and yet that does not seem to me to be more a Prophecy of the Messias than the Story of *Cadmus* ; the plain

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Part III. with a Thief.

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plain Sense of it seems only to be, That when the Serpent was doomed to creep on the Ground, Men should tread upon it, which is all can reasonably be meant, by bruising its Head; it was only the false Glosses of Fanciful Commentators, that would understand the Messias his Triumphant over the Devil by his Cross from this Passage. That mighty Prophecy of Balaam, concerning the *Star's coming out of Jacob*, and the *Scepter's rising out of Israel*, Numb. 24. 17. relates not at all to Christ, but to the People of the *Jews*; whom the *Seer*, for some Reasons best known to himself, had a well-wishing to, and said that, notwithstanding *Balak's* Opposition, were like to be a very Flourishing People. And as for the *Scepter's not departing from Judah till Shilo come*, 'tis hard to make that a Prediction of Christ, till we are able to understand what is understood by that obscure Word; and besides, 'tis plain that there never was a Scepter in the Tribe of *Judah* since *Zedekiah*; so that if this be a Prophecy of Christ, you must make him to have come at the time of the Jewish Captivity, which is a little too soon for your purpose.

*Ful. in Cyrill.  
Ed. Span. 262*

But as for the Prophecies quoted in the New Testament, they are ten times less to

the purpose than the other; they all relate to such different Matters from what they are brought to speak for; that it shocks the strongest Christian Faith to consider, and shew that the Alledgers of those Passages are so far from being Inspired Authors, that they do not seem to understand the common Sense of Words. St. *Matthew*, who seems to have the most unlucky Hand at these Quotations, has two or three of these Passages all together at the beginning of his Gospel. He quotes the Fourteenth of *Isaiah*, for a Prophecy of Christ's being Born of a Virgin, and yet *Celsus in Orig. Lib. 1.* *Julian. in Cyr. Lib. 8.* there is nothing of the Matter to be found there. For the Word *Gnalmah* in that place signifies only a young Woman, and so it is used in other places, as *Proverbs* 30. 18 and 19. where the wise Man reckons among the things not to be discovered, nor which leave no footsteps behind, *The way of an Eagle in the Air, &c.* and *the way of a Man with a Maid*; now such a kind of Maid as this is, does not make much for your purpose. Besides, if there be any Truth in this Prophecy, it must relate to some young Woman of that time, probably the Prophet's Wife, who shortly was to have a Child, before which should be of Years of Discretion, the *Jews* should

be

be delivered from their Oppressors. And then there is some Sense in this sign. But to make *Abaz* have a *sign* given him to be Accomplished at the Birth of Christ, so many hundred Years after his Death, is a Jest, and a Man must not only have a great deal of Faith, but a good stock of Fancy to make out. And so just after, when he quotes that Text of *Jeremy*, *Jer. 31. 15. Mat. 2. 17.* where *Rachel*, the Mother of the *Benjamites*, who dwelt in *Ramah*, is described weeping for her Children the Inhabitants, which were destroyed by God's Judgments; and he applies it without any Discretion, to *Herod's* Murder of the young Children. So the Words of *Hosea*, *Out of Egypt have I called my Son*, he makes a Prophecy of Christ's stay in *Egypt*, during *Herod's* Persecution, *Mat. 2. 15.* when 'tis plain to any one, that they are to be understood of the *Jews* deliverance out of their Bondage there, if you read but the whole Verse whence this is taken. *When Israel was a Child, then I loved him, and called my Son out of Egypt*, *Hos. 11. 1.* And so Passages out of the Second, and Seventy Second, and Two and Twentieth *Psalms*, are brought to as little purpose. For the two first of these are Composed upon *Solomon*, and the Title of the Seventy Second does expressly

expresly say so. And as for the Two and Twentieth, that is only a Pathetical Description of *David's* Sufferings. And as for most other places I think with *Celsus*, In *Orig. Ed. Cantab.* p. 138. they are *ἀγνοῦνται, μέγιστον ὃ μὴ ἀδυνα, &c.* Unintelligible, Enthusiastical, and perfectly obscure Sayings, which no wise Man can understand a tittle of, but only afford occasion to Fools and Juglers to apply to their purposes. What do you say to all this, *Credentius*?

*Cred.* Say to you! you have crouded together so much Blasphemy and Infidelity, I can hardly tell where to begin with you. But to bring you to a better Opinion of the Predictions of our Saviour, I would have you consider with your self,

I. Whether or no several of these Passages which you refer to, and others in the New Testament, that are Quoted out of the Old, be not brought in by way of Allusion or Accommodation, rather than Prophecy? Now unless you were sure that all those places of the New Testament you are wont irreligiously to expose, cannot possibly be understood this way, you do a very great piece of Injustice to these Writers. For why should not *St. Matthew*, or *St. Paul*, quote a Passage of *Isaiah*, or the *Psalms*,

Texts quoted  
by way of Accommodation.



*Psalms*, and apply it to another Sense, as well as you or I make the like use of a Verse of *Virgil* or *Ovid*? Suppose I should bespeak the Apostles, those first Famous Propagators of our Christian Faith, in the Words of *Virgil's* Invocation of the Sun and Moon, *Virg.* 1 *Georg.*

— *Vos O clarissima Mundi*  
*Lumina, &c.* —

You would not look upon this to be any great Solecism. Now why has not *St. Paul* the liberty to do the like, when he quotes a Passage of the Nineteenth *Psalms*, which is understood of the Sun and the Moon, and applies it to the Preaching of the Apostles? But I say have they not heard? yes, verily, their sound went into all the Earth, and their words unto the ends of the world, *Rom.* 15. 18. So our Saviour makes use of *Isaiab's* Words to the Jews of Old, to the Jews of his Time; *This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me*, *Mat.* 15. 12. 14. There is hardly any body will deny but that these Texts may fairly be accounted for by way of Accommodation. And I see no good Reason, but why several of the Texts you have mentioned may be Explained the same way. Suppose, I say,

say, when *St. Matthew* quotes that Text of *Hosea*, in his relation of Christ's coming back from *Egypt*, he had only a mind to use the Prophet's Words, *Out of Egypt have I called my son*, rather than in plain Words to say, *And thus God's Son came back out of Egypt*: you will not be able to make good the contrary against me. Nay, in what fitter Words could the Tragical Effects of *Herod's* barbarous Murder of the Infants be expressed in, than those of the Prophet which *St. Matthew* chose? *In Ramah there was a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.* Yes, you will say, these Passages cannot be quoted by way of Allusion, because they are brought in with this Clause, *That the Scripture might be fulfilled*, which shews they are meant for Prophecies. But I cannot think that the *Jews* always when they used this Phrase in Quoting a Text of Scripture, thought that Text was a Prophecy of what it was applied to. I only take it to be an Instance of the Religious way of Speaking, which the *Jews* above all Nations used. For as they were wont to attribute the common Actions of Life to God's doing, and to entitle Things Great and Remarkable to God, reflecting thereby an Honour



Honour upon God Himself; so I suppose they design'd a Respect to the Scripture by seeming to Attribute a Propheticalness to every part of it which they quoted. Not that they thought every Passage so alledged to be truly Prophetical of what they Accommodated it to, but only they made use of this honourable Expression to shew their great regard to God's Word. I doubt not but this Phrase, *That the Scripture might be fulfilled*, and the like, were used first in Quoting real Prophecies; but that this (as all other honourable Expressions) by long use sunk in its value, and was more vulgarly applied; so that at last it was given to Scripture only accommodated. There are an hundred Instances of this Nature to be given in all Languages; I shall instance but in one out of the Bible, which is very nigh of kin to this we are speaking of; and that is the Signification of the Word *Prophet*. In its first and ordinary Signification, we all know, that it signified an Inspired Messenger of God, and yet in process of Time it came to denote Poets, *Tit. 1. 12.* and Singers of *Psalms, 1 Sam. 10. 10. 1 Cor. 14. 1.* Now if *Prophecy* could at last come to signify only *Singing*, why might not the Phrase *Fulfilling of Scripture*, or *Prophecy*, signify only *Quotation*?

In a Second-  
ary, or Mysti-  
cal Sense.

2. It is to be observed, That many of these places quoted out of the Old Testament in the New, are to be supposed to be understood in a Mystical or Allegorical Sense; and therefore it is not fair to say they are falsely alledged, or not to the purpose, because the Literal Sense of the Original doth not import so much. Nothing was more common among the *Jews* than to Explain Scripture in such a Sense, and therefore the Writers of the New Testament, who Conversed chiefly among the *Jews*, are not to be blamed if they made use of their own way of Interpretation in their Disputes with them; which must be at least good Argumentation *ad Hominem*, and be more Convincing to them than Proofs which we might account more Solid. For most Men are very fond of their own way of Reasoning; and this the Apostles understood very well, and therefore when they speak to the *Greeks*, they address themselves to them in their way, and sometimes quote their own Authors, as *Aratus*, and *Epimenides*; but when they speak to the *Jews*, as for Instance, in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, they argue in their way, from the Types and Prefigurations of the Law and Prophets. It cannot be denied but that it was the Opinion of the Ancient

Ancient *Jews*, that the inspired Writings of the *Old Testament*, had a great deal more hidden Sense couch'd in them than what did at first sight appear; and this Doctrin I take to be as Old as the *Psalms* time. *I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy Commandment is exceeding broad*, Ps. 119. 96. That is, the Scripture is so full of Sense, has so much of Prophecie, Typical Prefiguration, and the like, (besides the Literal Meaning, which is Obvious to every one) that there is no coming to an end of it. And it is plain likewise, that this was the received Doctrin about our Saviour's time, by that saying of Saint Paul in the 10th. of the 1st. of the *Corinthians*, where speaking of several Actions in the History of the *Old Testament*, of the *Israelites* passing through the Sea, drinking out of the Rock, &c. the Apostle subjoyns, *which things happened τυπικῶς by way of Type, and were Written for our Education ἐν ᾧ τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατέστησαν on whom has lighted the Completion of the former Ages*: Not as we Translate it, *on whom the End of the World are come*. Where you may observe that the οἱ τύποι the Prefigurations of the former Ages are opposed to the τὰ τέλη or the Completions of the *Apostolick Age*. So again, *Gal. 4: 4.* he calls that Age πληρωμα τοῦ χρόνου the Fulfilling of Time, or the clear making out

out those Typical Passages of the former Ages. And *Eph. i. 10.* he calls the Time of the Gospel *οικονομίαν τῆς πληρώμας τοῦ αἰῶνος*, *The Dispensation of Completion, or Fulfilling of Times*; where all things *ἀνακεφαλαιώνται* are gathered into one in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are in Earth. That is, in him is made a Recapitulation of all the Types of the *Old Testament*; all the Ancient Law, and remarkable Actions of former Times, do as it were Centre in Him, and his Life and Passion is a kind of *Anacephalaësis* of them all. And so *St. Chrysostom* explains the place *ἐν ᾧ πάντα τὰ ὅτι μακρὸν λεγόμενα*, &c. That the Life of Christ is a Compendious Relation of what is said at length in their Types in the *Old Testament*. And so *St. Jerom*, who wonders that the Old *Latin Translation* should render *ἀνακεφαλαιῶσαι* *renovare*, when it is a Metaphor taken from an Orator's Recapitulation, or winding up his whole Discourse; and says, *Omnis Dispensatio tam visibilium quam invisibilium creaturarum adven-tum Dei filij pollicebatur*, &c. *The dispensation of all things visible and invisible, did foretel the coming of the Son of God; the driving of Man out of Paradise did foreshew his being re-called by Christ; the Division of Tongues, did prefigure the Apostles gift of Tongues; and Isaac in a Type did carry the Cross of Christ.*

Nor

Nor is it the Opinion & Practice only of the Writers of the *New Testament*, but alio of the Ancient and Modern *Jews*; the only fault is, these latter generally carry on the Matter too far in their *Midrash's* and *Cabbala's*; they often run all Matters of Fact into such strange Allegories, and find such wonderful Mysteries in Letters and Syllables, as makes a meer Jest of God's Word. But the Soberest of them do just as the Writers of the *New Testament* do, allow an Original Literal Sense of some remarkable Passage, and leave a Typical One to Prefigure something in the Gospel. Thus the *Targum* allows the *Seventy second Psalm* to bespoken principally of *Solomon*, but says, that Typically, or by way of Prophetick Excursion, is to be understood of the *Messias*. And the like is Asserted by *Solomon Jarchi*, a Learned Jewish Rabbín. And so this way several of the Passages quoted in the *New Testament*; some of which you have Alledged, may be fairly accounted for. As for Instance, that which the *Infidels* make the most terrible Work with of all: *And behold a Virgin shall conceive*, &c. It is true, that place in *Isaiab*, from whence this is taken, is not spoken solely of Christ, neither does the Apostle say it is, but only that the Prophet's Relation of that History did more eminent-

ly agree to Christ's Birth; and that the Virgin there mentioned, & the Child called *Immanuel*, were *Types*, or *Prophetick Descriptions* of Christ, and his Immaculate Conception. Nay, unless we will allow in some measure this Typical Prefiguration of our Saviour, and his Dispensation, there is no Sense to be made of an hundred Rites commanded in the Old Law; for *Moses* was a Man of good Sense, though you should own him only as a Secular Legiflator, and cannot be supposed to have commanded so many strange Rites to so little purpose as any other Account allots them. But if we allow them to be enjoined by the Inspiration of God, though by the Mouth of *Moses*, and primarily designed for the good Government, and Religious Worship of the Jews, but Secondly, for Types of our Saviour, there is a great deal of good Reason why some very strange Ceremonies should be used, as particularly the *Passover*, which is so clear an Emblem of Christ's Passion, all the Ceremonies of which ancient Sacrament answer exactly to the Circumstances of his Death. And I question whether some particular Passages in the Bible, the History of which is so short, would ever have been related, or at least in their full Circumstances, if they had not been designed

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ed to Prefigure things of a higher Nature.

*Phil.* I find if I do not stop you to cool a little in your Heat, you will talk so much of Types and Prophecies, that you will be running by and by. into an Enthusiastical Comment upon *Daniel* or the *Revelations*. But by the way, *Credentius*, if we should once allow this Typical or Allegorical way of Explaining *Scripture*, one might prove the History of *Guy of Warwick* out of the first chapter of *Genesis*. Nay, the most *Enthusiastical* Phanaticks would be the best Expositors; for they are for a World of Mystical Expositions, and have pretended to find Prophecies of Old *Noll* and *Muggleton* almost in every Book of the Bible. Nay, the Principal *Fathers* of the *Church* have perfectly balderdash'd the *Scripture* by these Types and Allegories; they make whatever they have a mind to out of any Text of *Scripture*, and give us rather a fine Exercise of their Fancy than a true Explication of it. And indeed some of your soberer Interpreters shew so little a liking to this way, that they do not look upon those *Texts* of *Scripture*, which are quoted as Prophecies in the *New Testament*, to be any solid Proof of the *Christian Religion*; and *Grotius* himself owns, that the Apostles did not prove

*Socin. Lett.*  
*Sacr. Smalc.*  
*De Div.*  
*Christ. Cap.*  
9.

that Christ was the *Messias* by these Prophe-  
tick Testimonies, but rather appealed to his  
Miracles; allowing these only to be brought  
in for Ornament sake, and as Arguments

*Grot. in Mat.  
Cap. 1.*

which were of no force to Con-  
vince *Infidels*, but were only fit-  
ted a little to strengthen those  
who were Good Christians already.

*Cred.* It is not my Business to Apologize  
for all the Excesses which some have been  
guilty of in Explaining Scripture in the  
Allegorical way, I know there have been  
several Abuses committed in this kind; I  
am only to Defend the Writers of the *New  
Testament*, all whose Arguments of this  
kind are very Sober and Natural; And they  
having the Spirit of God to Assist them in  
their Compositions, and to *Guide them into  
all Truth*, there is no doubt to be made, but  
that the Types they refer to, were certainly  
by God designed as such. Nay, further, I  
see not but why the same kind of Arguing  
may be used by Modern Divines, if they  
take care not to be too Fanciful this way,

*Isidor. Pelus.  
Ep. CIII.*

but keep themselves within the  
Bounds of Moderation and good  
Reason. And an Ancient Father  
lays down a very good Rule in this Case,  
*Νεφεχῶς δὲ καὶ ἰσογίαν, &c.* *Let us wise-  
ly understand those things in Scripture which*  
*are*



*are spoke according to the History, and so let us receive those Prophecies which are made out according to the*  
*\* Theory. But let us not*

\* The Ancients called the Allegorical way of Expounding Scripture, *Θεωρία*, Theory.

*make Theory of that which ought Historically to be understood, nor force that into an Historical Sense, which ought to be Theorized; but let us Adapt a proper and convenient Sense to both. But if the Prophecy be such, that it may be properly Interpreted according to the History, and yet the Theory of it be not forced, they may both of them be used. And truly, there does not want good Reason to think there is more Couched under some Expressions and Passages of Scripture, than upon first sight, and in the primary Intention does appear. Because the Scriptures are a Divine Composition, wrote by the Directions of an All-knowing-Mind, which can fore-see a Thousand Accidents and Future Contingencies, besides the principal Matters which the Indited Words have relation to. Indeed we Men, by reason of the scantiness of our Knowledge, are forced to Adapt our Words solely to the Thing which we are at present thinking of; because our Thoughts will not extend to more than one thing at the same Time; and because all Future Accidents are beyond the Ken of our Under-*

*standing.*

standing. But what Reason is there that we should Tie God Almighty to this Rule, and make our Imbecillity the Measure of his Boundless Knowledge? *His Thoughts are not like our Thoughts, nor his Ways like our Ways.* 'Tis true, all other Books besides the Scriptures being the Productions of Human Understandings, are only to be Interpreted according to the most obvious Sense of the Words, because it is to be supposed the limited Thoughts of the Writer had no further a reach. But when the great God of Heaven and Earth is pleased, for the Good of his Creatures, Himself to Indite Writings which are to be the standing Directions to Mankind for all Future Generations; there is no doubt to be made but almost every Word of that Divine Composition, takes its place there by the Direction of an Infinite Wisdom, and that He, by his Fore-knowledge, has an Eye to the Circumstances of Future Ages, whilst He is directing Himself seemingly only to those in whose Time the Books were wrote. Such an Heavenly Composition must needs bear many Impresses of the boundless Thoughts of its Almighty Author, and cannot easily be thought to be Limited to the narrow Particulars they were first designed for. One might Instance in an hundred Texts of Scripture, where 'tis  
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Part III. *with a Theist.*

23

obvious that the Holy Ghost has industriously Worded an Expression so, as it might be direction either for the Faith or Morality of Future Ages; and yet seemingly, it may be to the Inspired Writers themselves, nothing like it was intended. I shall content my self with one Particular. Our Blessed Saviour is Recorded by the Evangelist, *Mat. 26. 27.* in the delivery of the Cup in the blessed Sacrament, to say to the Communicants, *Drink ye all of this.* Now I doubt not by that the Holy Ghost, besides the bare Relation of the History of this Sacrament, which was all that the Church for several Hundreds of Years, and perhaps the Evangelist himself understood by it, I say, besides this, I doubt not but that the Holy Ghost did design particularly to set up an Everlasting Monument of the Truth, and fix an Eternal Brand upon the Impious Sacrilege of the *Romish Church.* For when the Evangelist omits the Word *All* in the relation of the delivery of the Bread, and mentions it, as it should seem, so Emphatically in that of the Cup; it is plain that something more is designed than a bare Historical Relation. And this I take to be the case of many of the Types and Predictions of the *Old Testament*; they were not so exactly discoverable before the Coming of Christ, because

because Men were not acquainted with the Life and Actions of that blessed Person, which did so exactly correspond with those remarkable Passages of the *Old Testament*, which did Prefigure them; but afterwards they could not but own them to be designed for Marks of Him, when they compared our blessed Saviour; and the Types and Prophecies together. For then there appeared such a wonderful Analogy between the Oeconomy of the Old and New Law, that the Ceremonies and Expiations Commanded by *Moses*, were but Shadows of the Doctrine and Satisfaction of Christ, and that the Lives and remarkable Actions of several Famous Persons, before the Birth of our Saviour, were but laid out by order of God's Providence, for rough Draughts of the great Design of Christ's Mediatorship. There are a multitude of Instances of this kind to be produced out of the Five Books of *Moses*, and other Books of the *Old Testament*, which will Convince any one that will be at the pains, to observe them himself, by a careful Reading, or out of Christian Expositors, and other Writers, nay, even from the Jewish Rablins themselves, who make many of those Passages Types of the Messiah; as we do. And now after all, what Absurdity is there that a Book Wrote by the

the *Divine Institution*, as we suppose the *Old Testament* to be, should have a wise Regard to the *Actions* and *Occurrences* of Future Times ; & have another *Accomplishment* of its *History* or *Predictions* than what was primarily design'd ? Have not you and I often several *Reasons* & *Motives* for doing one Thing ? and therefore, Why may not God Almighty indite one *History* or *Prophecie* to serve *Two* several Ends, or which might have *Two* several Completions ? The carrying on of two such Designs, can in no wise be denied to the *Divine Wisdom*, which we see does in some measure lye within the Compass of *Human Sagacity*. And 'tis but reasonable to think, that such a Great and Unparallel'd Instance of the *Divine Providence* as the *sending of the Messias* to save the Souls of Mankind, the like of which never was, nor ever will be known again ; I say, 'tis but reasonable, that this amazing Dispensation should not stand singly by its self, and fall upon Mankind without any previous Preparation ; but that Men should be disposed thereunto by some great *Prophecies* and *Presignations*, and that many of the other lesser Lines of God's *Providence* should be pointing at, and drawing to this Mighty Centre. And besides, this is yet more reasonable, when the *Infallible Spirit* of God  
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in the *New Testament* does it self direct to these Types, and does point out to us what former Occurrences were Prefigurations of the *Messias* and his Dispensation. But, however, we ought not (as some do) to make use of this Typical way of Explaining *Scripture* to the destroying the Letter, and when it is plain, the words are literally Prophetick; when only the Prophet has gone off of a sudden from his first, to a more Sublime and Diviner Subject. And now, having premised thus much, I will give a short Answer to the Prophetick Texts of *Scripture* just now quoted.

*Phil.* And I wish you good luck in your *Expositions* of them; I am sure they make the generality of your Commentators sweat under the *Difficulties*, and serve only to make us *Infidels* sport with their clashing with one another.

*Cred.* Why then, by your leave, I will begin with that of the 3<sup>d</sup>. of *Gen.* v. 15. I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy seed and her seed: It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. I say, this is a very direct and clear Prophecie of our Blessed Saviour. For God Almighty, who spake these words, directs them to the Devil,



to Devil, an Envious and Malicious  
 hat Spirit, who had embodied himself  
 of in, and made use of the Corporeal  
 but Organs of a certain *Animal*, which  
 to *Moses* here calls a *Serpent*; and therefore he  
 ing so expresses himself, that the words may a-  
 and gree both to the *Devil* and the *Serpent* too,  
 lly who by this *Possession* had acquired a sort of  
 has *Personal Union* with one another; so that  
 ore what was said to one might be understood  
 ow, of either of them. The sense of the whole  
 e a *Malediction* in which this Prophecy is con-  
 of tain'd, as it is laid down in the present, the  
 our fore-going and following Verses, seems in  
 the short to be this. Because there are four *De-*  
 un- *linquents* in this great Depravation of *Hu-*  
 ke *man Nature*, and vitiating this Noble Work;  
 one therefore you shall all of you share your al-  
 lotted Punishments. As for the Serpent,  
 whose Body was made use of for this Wick-  
 ed Design, I adjudge his Body, for a Mo-  
 nument of this Unhappy Miscarriage, to be  
 changed from his Original Figure; from  
 that erect Gate, that beautiful and shining  
 Form, that nimble and volatile Motion, in-  
 to that hated shape of one of the ordinary  
 creeping Serpentine kind. As for the Man  
 who was overcome by the allurements of his  
 Wife, the *Earth* shall be Cursed for his sake,  
 and he shall be forced with Labour and Toil

*Gen. 3. 15.*  
 A Prophecy  
 of Christ.

to

to Earn the Necessaries of Life, when he would so perversly Violate the Law of God and unnaturally Ruine his whole Posterity for such a foolish gratification of his Appetite. The Woman for her Guilt shall undergo the Pains and Difficulty of Travel. But the Devil, who was the principal Author of this Mischief, shall have his Head bruised by the seed which shall be born of the Woman. Tho' thou, O *Satan*, mayst bruise the Heel of the Woman, and of her Offspring, by disturbing them with Temptations, and making them Obnoxious to Temporal Calamities ; yet Christ, that *Holy Seed*, which shall be Born of her, shall bruise thy head, shall perfectly destroy thy Power, and ruine thy Kingdom ; the bruising of her heel shall not be a Mortal Wound, but shall be healed by the Merits of the *Messias* ; but the Wound in thy Head (like that of the Serpent which thou dost possess) shall be Incurable ; for Christ not taking upon him the Nature of Angels, *Heb. 2. 16.* shall leave thee and thy seed, thou and the other fallen Spirits for ever irremediable. Indeed some *Modern Criticks* and *Commentators* will have these words to be understood only of the Corporeal Serpent, and I must needs say *Christianity* is mightily obliged to some of them for critisizing away her Principal Supports,



ports, and leaving us only some fanciful Analogies and Shreads of *Homer* and *Virgil* in lieu of them. But if these Words were only directed to the Corporeal Viperous Serpent, what a jejune Meaning, nay what an unjust determination must this *Divine Menace* carry with it? Here is a Curse on the Serpent to go always upon his belly, when according to this supposition he never went otherways. And besides, here is the Man, the Woman, and the Serpent, Cursed to some purpose, who had but the lesser share in the Guilt; and the crafty Devil, who was the Wicked Contriver and Carrier on of all this Mischiefe, must upon this supposition escape Scot-free. For unless under the Name of the Serpent the Devil be understood, he can have no share in the awarded Punishment. Now the great Occasion which has made Interpreters so much disagree upon this place, some attributing the Curse wholly to the Devil, and others wholly to the Serpent, has been the want of the due considering the *Personal Union* which was then betwixt the Devil and the Serpent; so that the word *Thou* spoke to both of them in Conjunction might agree to either; or when it was directed to the outward appearance of the Serpent, might be understood of the Devil, who was Actuating those Organs. So that  
when

when the Curse says, *upon thy Belly shalt thou go*, That is to be understood of the Outward Serpent, or the Body which the Devil did then possess; when it says, *I will put Enmity between thee and the Serpent*, &c. That may have a double meaning, and may be understood both of the Outward Serpent and the Devil, and Antipathy of Mankind to Viperous Animals, and the Malice of the Devil to us, or the War between the Flesh and the Spirit: But when it says, *the Womans seed shall bruise thy head*, This can be understood only of the Devil, who was to have his share of the Punishment inflicted upon him this way. For certainly nothing could be more grievous to that Malicious Spirit, than to have his Plot thus defeated by this gracious Promise of the *Messias*, to see the hopes of Fallen Mankind thus of a sudden raised, and his own forever sunk. Indeed, it may be allow'd, that the Phrase *bruising of the head*, is a Metaphor drawn from the usual way of killing a Serpent, which is wounding the head; and the *bruising the heel*, may be likewise taken from the usage of Venomous Reptiles to bite the Heel or Foot; but this can never be the full sense of the Words, unless we can suppose that the Devil had no hand in this sad Disaster, or that

Moses

*Moses* tells this Story only of a Common Serpent, that once upon a time did Talk, which would be such a silly piece Legendary Stuff as the Excellent Writings of that Wise Author do demonstrate he could never be Guilty of. Nor is it any Objection against what I say, That one part of this Execration Relates to the Corporeal Serpent and the other to the Devil; because at that time when the Devil possessed the Serpentine Organs, they were, as it were, personally United, and for a Time One. So that it was as proper to say, *Thou shalt go upon thy belly*, meaning the Serpent, *Thou shalt have thy kingdom destroyed*, meaning the Devil, though the Word *Thou* were directed only to the outward visible Serpent; I say, this is altogether as proper, as when any one shall say to the same individual me, *Thou walkest*, *Thou thinkest*, though these be the Acts of two distinct Beings, though personally United, the one of my Body, the other of my Mind, which are as much Two in their Original Natures, as the Devil and the Serpent.

*Phil.* But when there is nothing of the Devil here mentioned, nor of his Empire being destroyed; why should you Christians fly to such a hard Metaphorical Sense, which no body could have found out but those

those who go a Fishing for Arguments and which most certainly would never have been dreamt of, but that some prying Christian or other, was willing to pick up something about Christ in the beginning of his Bible.

*Cred.* But indeed, Sir, you have mightily mistaken the Matter, for none of all this is any Christian Invention; and if you remember, in a former Discourse, *Conf. Theist. Part I.* I made appear to you, That the ancient Jews, under the *Old Testament*, owned that the Devil was the occasion of Man's Fall. And now I will shew, that the ancient Jews likewise understood the Words we are now speaking of to be a Prophecy of the Messias. *Onkelos*, the old *Chaldee* Paraphrast, Explains the Words thus. *I will put enmity between thee, O Serpent, and the Woman, and between thy Son, and her Son; He shall retaliate as much evil to thee, as thou hast done to her.* And the *Targum* of *Jonathan*, another old Jewish Paraphrast, speaks thus. *I will put enmity between thee, and the woman, and between the Seed of thy Children, and her Children. And it shall come to pass, when the Children of the Woman shall keep the Precepts of the Law, then they shall be watchful to wound thee in the Head: and when they shall forsake the Precepts of the Law,*

Law, then thou shalt be watchful to strike them in the Heel. But they shall have a Remedy, and thou shalt have no Remedy. And it shall come to pass, that they shall make to themselves a Plaister for their Heel, in the Days of Messias the King. And the Targum of Jerusalem not much unlike, And it shall be when the Sons of the Woman shall meditate upon the Law, and shall do the Precepts, they shall be intent to strike thee upon the Head; and shall kill thee. And when the Sons of the Woman shall desert the Precepts of the Law, and not do its Commands, then thou shalt be intent to hurt them in their Heels, and shalt make them sick. But there shall be a Remedy to the Sons of the Woman; but to thee, O Serpent, there shall be no Remedy, forasmuch as Time shall come, when one of them shall make a Plaister for the other in the Heel, in the end of Extremity of Days, in the Days of King Messias. These are such evident and home Proofs of a most Ancient Tradition, and received Opinion of the Messias being Promised in these Words, that if the Suspicious Jews had not had the keeping of these Books all along, 'tis an hundred to one but that the Devil had been dealing with some Critick or other, to have branded these Passages with a *Pia Fraus* in their Fore-head for the service of the Infidels. Now if we consider

this Ancient Interpretation of this Passage of Scripture in the Jewish Church, and the Reason of the thing it self, how Rational it is that the Devil should have his share of Punishment allotted him in the Malediction, and how agreeable it is to the Goodness of God to reach out this Mercy, and declare this Comfortable Promise to them upon their unhappy Fall, who from this and other Promises, all along the Patriarchal Times, had a constant Expectation of a Messias to come to repair this fatal Miscarriage; I say, to a Man that considers all this, there cannot be any other Interpretation of this place which can be equally Satisfactory. I do not say that this Prophecy, as it is Recorded in *Moses*, is one of the clearest of those which are found in Scripture, or that I would have particularly chose this to Convert an Infidel; for I know there are others which are less liable to Cavils: but I think I have proved that this is liable to no just Exceptions, and I am sure I have said more for it than the Infidels, or Criticks either, can possibly say against it. This Interpretation has been allowed by the Church in all Ages, and among our Moderns, the most Judicious and Pious, both of *Lutherans*, *Calvinists* and *Papists* as well as those of our own Church, do explain the place this way.

Nay,



Nay, if we may believe the Relations of two very learned and sober Men, the Devil has owned this charge against himself, and been terrified with the bare repeating of this Prophecy. *Johannes Brentius*, in the Preface to the fifth Tome of his Fathers Works, about the End of it, has this Remarkable Relation. The Preface is directed to the Senate of the City of *Hall* in *Sweedland*. When *Christopher Haafs* was Governour of this Famous Republick, and who was my God-father, a Gentleman, whom I cannot but mention with Honour, and one of extraordinary Prudence and Piety : When this Gentleman lay upon his Death-Bed, a few days before his Death, there enters into the Room a certain Person, whom he took to be a Scrivener, with Pen, Ink, and Paper, who sitting down at the Table, thus spoke to the Sick Man : *Christopher*, (says he) give an Account of all the sins of your life, for I am sent by God to take an Account of them, and to bring them before his Tribunal, where you shall Answer for whatever you have done. The Sick Man lifting up himself, as well as he could, in his Bed, and now understanding that he had to do with a Wicked Spirit, answered with a courageous mind, Let a Title be wrote to the Instrument first, which shall be this, *Semen malieris conteret caput Serpentis*, The Seed of the Woman



*shall bruise the Serpent's Head. Under this Title I will put all my Sins, both of Commission and Omission. And the Devil upon hearing this Answer vanished.* A like Story is related by *Johannes Wolphius*, in his Famous Book *Lectiones Mirabiles*, Tom. 2. p. 396. of an Old Man of *Friburg*, who upon his Death-Bed drove away the Devil by the same Text of Scripture. I do not mention this to you, *Philologus*, as if I thought I should be able to Convince a Man of your Character of the Truth of this Relation; but only to shew the general Opinion of *Christians* and *Jews* of this Text of Scripture, being to be understood as a Prophecy of Christ. Tho' thus much I would have you observe by the way, That these are no *Popish* Legendary Stories, but are related by two very Sober and Learned *Protestants*.

Your next Objection is against the Prophecy of *Jacob*, *Gen. 49.*  
Scepter of  
Judah, Gen.  
49. 10. Pro-  
phesy of  
Christ.
*10. The Scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his feet, till Shilo come, and to him shall the Gathering of the Nations be, or, he shall be the expectation of the Nations.* Now I think this is a very clear Prophecy of our Blessed Saviour, and is a manifest Proof of his being the True *Messias*. That the Ancient *Jews* understood this Passage of the

the *Messias* is evident from the Old *Paraphrasts*, and other Ancient *Rabbins*; so that you must not say this is a fancied Interpretation of the Christians only. *Onkelos* explains it thus: *The Author of Royal Power shall not pass away from the House of Judah, nor the Scribe from the Children of his Children, till the Messias comes, whose is the Kingdom.* *Jonathan* Paraphrases thus. *There shall not cease Kings and Governours from the House of Judah, and Scribes teaching the Law from his Seed, even to the time when King Messias shall come.* And the *Targum* of *Jerusalem* after this manner. *Kings shall not fail from the House of Judah, nor Scribes, Doctors of the Law from the Sons of the Sons of Judah, until the time that Messias the King shall come, whose is the Kingdom, and to whom all Kings of the Earth shall be subjected.* The like Explication is given by the Author of the Ancient Book called *Berehith Rabba*, by *Kimchi*, *Moses Hadarshan*, and other Ancient *Jews* quoted by *Galatinus*, lib. 4. cap. 5. and 6. And the reason why some Modern ones have attributed this famous Passage to *Saul* or *Solomon*, or *Nebuchadnezzar*, is only the Malice they bear to our Saviour and our Religion, which they are grieved to see defended by so clear a Testimony. Now I say this does appear to be a clear Testimo-

ny of Jesus Christ his being the *Messias*, if we consider the plain sense of the Words, which is, that about the time of the coming of the *Messias*, the Scepter shall depart from *Judah*. The greatest difficulty is to know what is most naturally to be understood by *Scepter* and what by *Judah*. Now by *Scepter* must be understood one of these two things, either Government by a King, or any other Monarch, whose Authority the Scepter is the Emblem of; or else Government in General, so as to take in all the particular ways of Polity, a Nation may be Ruled by. And by *Judah* must be understood either the Tribe of that Name, or else the whole Nation of the *Jews*, who were so called from that most eminent Tribe. To understand by *Scepter* that there should be always, till the *Messias* come, a standing Monarchy among the *Jews*, and particularly of the Tribe of *Judah* cannot be allow'd; for there was no *Scepter* among the *Jews* in this sense, till *Saul* was King, and he was not of the Tribe of *Judah* neither, neither was there any King of that Tribe after *Zedekiah*, and after the Captivity they had no King at all, unless those of the Family of *Herod*, who were of a Foreign Extraction, and were *Jews* only by *Profelitism*; neither can it be said that any Government at all

was

was constantly entailed upon the Tribe of *Judah*; for during *Moses* his time, the Government of the *Jews* was in the Family of *Levi*, during the time of the *Judges* it was among divers of the Tribes; in the beginning of the Monarchy, it was in *Saul* or the Tribe of *Benjamin*; after him, in *David* and his Posterity till the Captivity; and after that among the *Levites* of the *Asmonean* Race. So that it can by no means be said that the *Israelitish* Government did always continue in the Tribe of *Judah*.

It remains, therefore, that by *Scepter* is understood a *settled Polity*; and by *Judah* is understood the People of the *Jews*, who derived their name from that Tribe, which ever since the *Babylonian* Captivity has made the greatest Body of that People; for the *Ten Tribes* being lost in that long Exile, the Tribe of *Judah* only, with the Ascenditious One of *Benjamin*, did Compose this People as we now see them, and as they have been for above these *Two Thousand Years*. Therefore the Sense of the Prophecy must be this: That, till the time of the *Messias*, there shall be always a *settled Polity*, or Government, among the *Jews*; there shall be a *Scepter* and *Lawgiver* among them, they shall be a distinct Nation of themselves, and shall be Governed by their own Laws; but

after that time, this Promise shall cease, then they shall have no more a *Scepter* or *Law-giver*, then they shall be no longer a settled People ; but shall be dispersed throughout all the corners of the Earth, and live under the rigid Laws of other Nations, wherever they chance to come. Now the Prophecy, in this Sense, was most manifestly compleated about the time of our Saviour Christ's coming. For all along before, since the *Jews* were grown up, from a Family to a People, they were Governed by Laws and Rulers of their own ; not only during the time of their *Judges* and *Kings*, which was their more Flourishing Estate, but even after their Captivity, for a time, by the *Assyrian* Race, who were of the Ancient *Levitical* Blood ; and afterwards by the *Herodian* Family, who, tho' they were only *Jews* by religion, yet they maintained Their *Laws* and *Discipline* as well, as if they had been Originally so. But about the coming of Christ, that is, a few Years after his Ascension, the *Scepter* of the *Jews* was perfectly taken away, and they have had no National Government ever since : *Jerusalem*, the Metropolis of their Nation, was about that time utterly destroyed, and raced to the ground ; and such a dispersion of that People made all about the World, as no History can Parallel

parallel. For, tho' the *Romans* Conquered *Spain*, and *Gaul*, and *Britain*, &c. yet they never so chac'd these Nations out of their Country as they did the *Jews*; but suffered them to Incorporate with their own Colonies; so that those Countries seem'd to be the same People still, tho' their Government was something altered by the Introduction of *Roman* Laws. But ever since *Titus* his Devastation of that City and Country, there has been no face of a Common-Wealth among the *Jews* either in *Judah* or in any other place; and therefore, I say, this Total Dissolution of the *Jewish* Common-Wealth is the *departing of the Scepter*, which is mentioned in this Prophecy. Now when we consider, that all the Ancient *Jews* took this passage as a Prophecy of the *Messias*, and that a Scepter should be among the *Jews* till the time of the *Messias*, when there should be an End of it; we may reasonably conclude, that our Saviour was that *Messias*. Because at that time no body, besides our Saviour, had any colour or pretence to be the *Messias*; and because that great and fatal Period of the *Jewish* Scepter or Government, happened just after his Appearance: Therefore, I say, it must be concluded that the *departing of the Scepter* was that Wonderful Dissolution: And that  
our



our Saviour, about the time of whose Appearance upon Earth this came to pass, is the *Shilo*, or the *Messias* that is here Predicted.

*Phil.* But by the way, Sir, this is a little too much forced to go down with us. How comes the Tribe of *Judah*, or the Seed of that one Patriarch, to signify the whole Nation of the *Jews*, of which this was but a *Twelfth* Part?

*Cred.* Why, during all the Time of the *Jewish* Establishment, the Tribe of *Judah* was the most Eminent; & had a Precedency of the Rest, not only by Reason of their Wealth and Number, but upon account of their Primogeniture. After they had Kings, the Monarchy was entailed upon that Tribe: And after the Captivity, That was the only Tribe in a manner remaining, and all the *Israelites* that are now known to be in the World, & that have been ever since the Captivity of *Babylon*, are denominated *Jews* from that Tribe. For if there are any of the other Tribes among them, as to be sure there are many of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, and perhaps of some of the Rest, they are all engrafted upon the Stock of the Tribe of *Judah*, and therefore do very properly bear its

*The Whole Nation of the Jews properly understood by Judah.*

its Name. As at first the Primitive Inhabitants of the City of *Rome*, only bore the Name of *Romans* from their first Founder *Romulus*; yet afterwards the *Sabines*, and other People that were Incorporated with them, had the same Name likewise. And why may not all the *Israelites*, which were built upon the Stock of *Judab*, be called as properly by his Name, as all the mixed Citizens of *Rome*, by that of *Romulus*? Now unless we should expect, that *Jacob* in this Prophetick Blessing of *Judab*, should be so nice as to descend to all the particular Variations of the *Jewish* Government, he could hardly express the whole National Felicity of all the Tribes, among whom that of *Judab* should make the greatest Figure, and at last be all in all; I say, unless he had been thus particular, he could hardly express this more properly, than by the Scepter shall not depart from *Judab*.

*Phil.* Well! but if this be such a manifest Prophecie of Christ, how came it never to be mentioned by the Writers of the New Testament, who are wont to amass together Prophecies, which are not half so much to the Purpose? Or how come the ancient Fathers, to put such a different Sense upon the Words, and to make the Prophecie to have its Completion in *Herod*?

*Cred;*

*Why this Propheſie not quoted in the new Teſtament.*

*Cred.* As to the former Part of your Queſtion, why this Propheſie was not quoted by the Writers of the New Teſtament? This I know has been ſtarted and endeavoured to be answered by ſeveral Learned Men: *Pererius* \* ſays the Reason was, becauſe this Propheſie only proved the Time when the *Meſſias* ſhould come; but did not prove that Chriſt was the *Meſſias*.

\* *Per. in Gen.*  
29.

Monſ. *Huet's* † Reason is, becauſe this Text ſingly of its ſelf does not prove Chriſt to be the *Meſſias*, but only in Conjunction with others. But I think this to be the truer account of the matter; that though the Evangelists were not bound to quote every Text of the Old Teſtament, which referred to the *Meſſias*, in Proof of Jeſus his being the *Chriſt*; for that would have obliged them to have Tranſcribed almoſt the whole Law and the Prophets, *Luke* 16. 29. Yet they would have hardly omitted this remarkable Paſſage, if it had been proper to have alledged it either, when the Goſpel was Preached by our Saviour, or when moſt of the Goſpel-Hiſtories were wrote. If our Bleſſed Saviour had alledged this Text in Proof of his being the *Meſſias*, and ſaid the

† *Demonſ.*  
*Evang.*

Scepter

Scepter was departing from *Judah* upon his coming, this would have been apt to have raised too many Jealousies in the Heads of those of the *Jewish* Government; which might have prejudiced them against his Doctrine too much, and have hindered his Preaching. Neither was it a convincing Argument in the beginning of Christianity, before *Jerusalem* was destroyed, and the People so dispersed, as they were never like to return again. Now Men could not be absolutely sure, that the Scepter and Legislator was perfectly departed from the *Jews*, till a considerable Time after the Gospels were wrote; and therefore I take this to be a very probable Reason of this Prophecies Omission by them.

As to your second Question, Why we Interpret this Place contrary to the Ancient Fathers, who understood it of *Herod*?

*How the Ancient Fathers Interpreted this Prophecy.*

I Answer. It is true that most of the Ancient Fathers did Interpret this place of *Herod*, it may be, from the mistaken Opinions of some of the *Jews* who lived in *Herod's* time, who from this Prophecy ill-applied, did flatter him that he was the *Messias*; which was that Sect of the *Herodians*, mentioned in the Gospel, *Mat. 22. 16. Mar. 12. 13.*

as

as *Tertullian*, *Epiphanius*, and other of the Ancients inform us.

This gave occasion to many of the Primitive Christians to think, that here were some marks of *Herod's* Government in this Text, and tho' it could not be referred to *Herod* as the *Messias*, yet they thought it referred to Christ, as Born in the days of *Herod*, who being an *Idumean*, and not of the *Twelve Tribes*; they supposed then the Scepter was departed from *Judah*. But upon the most Impartial Consideration, we must needs allow that the *Scepters departing from Judah*, must have a higher Sense than to signify a bare *Idumean Jew* his coming to the Crown; for he was a *Jew* however, and zealous for their Law, and that Nation lived in a great deal of Splendor under him, and made a greater Figure than they had done in some Ages before; so that this must be a very jejune Sense to put upon that expression of the *Scepters departing from Judah* or the *Jews*; because, I say, the *Jews* enjoy'd the Benefit of a Scepter of their own more eminently than they had done a great while before.

But the Devastation of the City, and Dispersion of the People, in *Titus* his Expedition, was a *departing of the Scepter* in good earnest, and does much better suit with the words

words of the Prophecy, than the Succession of *Herod*. And this was the Opinion of some of the most considerable of the Ancients too, as particularly of *Justin Martyr*, who in his Colloquy with *Tryphon* the Jew, has these words: *There is none of you who can be so confident to assert, or are able to shew, that there was ever wanting a Prophet, or a Prince, in our Nation, from the very beginning of it till after the time when this Jesus Christ was Born and had suffered. For though you say that Herod, under whose Reign he was Born, was an Askalonite; yet you must needs allow, that you had an High-Priest of your own Race, who Offered up Sacrifices, and perform'd other Things according to your Law, and there was a succession of the Prophets down to John. And when after the subduktion of your Country, your People were carried away to Babylon, and all your Holy Vessels taken away, the Prophet among you did not cease, who was your Lord, and Leader, and Governour. For the Spirit, which was in your Prophets, did anoint and appoint your Kings. But after the Appearing and the Death of our Christ, who was of your Blood, you never had, nor have now, any more a Prophet; nay ever since you have ceased to be governed by a King of your own.*



So that you see this Holy Martyr refers the Completion of this Prophecy to the time after the Death of Christ, when the Jewish Government ceased; and sets aside the other Opinion, which referred it to Herod's being an Askalonite.

Nay, that the *Mahometans* themselves took this Text in the Sense as I have now explained it, I will give you a Remarkable Instance out of an *Arabick* Writer *Ahmed Ibn. Idris*, quoted by *Hottinger*, *Thesaur. Phil. lib. 1. cap. 2.* The Text of the Law confirms the Prophecy of Jesus, upon whom be Peace, when he says, The Scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from his feet till the Messias come. Which has come to pass, for there were not wanting Kings to the Jews nor an Empire, till Messias his time, upon whom be Peace. But Then they became a vile Opprobry and a Captive People, which is so true they cannot deny. And this is an evident Argument for the Truth of the Prophecy concerning Isa, or Jesus, upon whom Peace. For Moses, of pious memory, did foretel, That they should be addicted to Vanity or Lying, and that the Messias should bring Truth, which should drive away Vanity or Lying. This is a very surprising Testimony from an Infidel in behalf of our Religion, and since you *Deists*, and the *Mahometans*, have been so gracious

cious of late, I desire you would learn of them to treat our Saviour with the same Good Breeding, at least, that they do.

*Phil.* Well, Sir, but what think you of *Balaam's Prophecy of Christ*? Would God Almighty, think you, be Beholden, for a Prophecy of the *Messias*, from an *Edomitish* Fortune-teller? All that I can find by the matter, is, that the Jews had been dabling a little, it may be, with the Seer; so that as I told you before, the *Star's coming out of Jacob*, and a *Scepter's arising out of Israel*, is no more than that the Jews would be a Flourishing People: So that whatever your Apologists and Interpreters say, this is no more a Prophecy of Jesus Christ, than of *William the Conqueror*.

*Cred.* The words of the Prophecy, you speak of, are these: *I shall see Him, (says Balaam) but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall arise out of Israel, and shall smite the Corners of Moab, and destroy all the Children of Sheth, &c. Numb. 24. 17.* Now let the meaning of this Prophecy be what it will, you ought not to lay any Unfairness at the Christians doors, for applying this to our *Blessed Saviour*, when the Jews did before attribute it to the

*Balaam's  
Star, Numb.  
24. 17. A  
Prophecy of  
Christ.*

E *Messias:*

*Messias*. For not only all the Three Old Paraphrasts do unanimously explain this Passage of the *Messias*; but some of the Moderns too, as particularly *Maimonides*, who allows the former part of this Prophecy to belong to the *Messias*, and the latter part to *David*. And, moreover, it is plain, that in former times, the Jews did understand it of the *Messias*, from the History

*Euf. Hist.*

*Eccl. lib 4.*

of the Famous Jewish Impostor *Bar-Cuziba*, who stiled himself

*Bar-Chocheba*, or the *Son of a Star*, from this Prophecy. And, if we attentively

consider the words of the Prophecy, they do very exactly agree with the History of *Jesus Christ*: For who can be so properly called a *Star* as our Blessed Lord, who was *that Light who lighteth every one that cometh into the World*; that has diffused the Light of the Gospel throughout so many dark and formerly idolatrous corners of the World?

The Scepter, which here is said *to rise out of Israel*, does very aptly signify the Spiritual Kingdom of Christ, or that Divine Government he exercises over his Church, which is made up of so many Christian Nations, and dispersed more or less over the face of the whole Earth. And by the *smiting the corners of Moab, and the Children of Sheth*, which was a *Moabitish Town*, is very

fitly

fitly represented the Downfal of so many Idolatrous Worships, by the Preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This will appear to be no forced sense of the Words, to any one that considers, that there was nothing ever happened half so Remarkable among the whole Nation of the Jews, as this Spiritual Kingdom of Christ: No one of all their Kings or Princes ever made one quarter of the Figure in the World as our Blessed Saviour, so as to deserve the name of a Star, in competition with him. What are the little inconsiderable Conquests of that Nation, to the mighty Success of the Preaching of the Gospel? And how little did the Polity of that small People deserve to be taken notice of and pointed out to Heathen Nations, as a considerable Scepter, in comparison with the diffusive extent of the Gospel Dispensation? To put any other sense upon the Words, must be a very frigid and jejune Interpretation, in respect of this. It is true, indeed, that *David*, who was King of the *Israelites*, did Conquer the *Moaabites*, but this was a very inconsiderable Victory to the Triumphs of Christ over the Kingdom of Darkness; who not only introduced the Light of the Gospel in *Idumæa*, but dispersed it throughout the whole Idolatrous World.

As for your sly Reflection upon a supposed Correspondence between the Jews and *Balaam*, who you think was Bribed into their Interest ; I am sure you have no foundation for that in Scripture, which always represents *Balaam* zealous for his Prince *Balak*, and endeavouring to serve him tho' against his Conscience : So that I look upon this only as a fine side-wind-Jest, that may squint a little upon the Clergy, it being grown very fashionable of late, and a piece of Gallantry to wound their Profession thro' the sides of Popish Priests, or Heathen Necromancers. And if I should Answer to this in good earnest, you would only laugh at me for my pains ; and therefore, I pray, Sir, Proceed to something else.

*Phil.* Then what say you, *Credentius*, to *Isaiab* his *Virgin*, or Young Woman ? How can that be a Prophecy of Christ, when it had its Completion even in *Isaiab's* time, or else it could be no sign to King *Abaz* to confirm his Belief in what the Prophet told him ?

*Cred.*

Part III. *with a Theist.*

53

*Cred.* The words in *Isaiah* are these, *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign, Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his Name Immanuel. Butter and Honey, &c. Isa. 7. 14.* Now tho' you could fasten another Sense of

*A Virgin shall conceive, &c. Isa. 7. 14. A Prophecy of Christ.*

the Words, than its being a Prophecy of Christ, or tho' you could prove it not at all to be so; yet the Writers of the New Testament are not to be charged with any sinister dealing in this matter, because this Text likewise was Interpreted by the Jews just as it is by the Christians, as Prophetick of the Messias, whom from this and other places of Scripture, they did universally agree, was to be Born of a Virgin. I will instance in

two or three Authorities, and refer you, for further satisfaction, to the Writings of Learned Men upon this Subject. An Ancient Jewish Book, called *Bemidder Rabba*, says, *This place is understood not only of Hezekiah but also of the Messias.* Where by the way you may take Notice, That those Jews who would have this Prophecy to be understood of *Hezekiah*, are of Opinion, that He was Miraculously Born of a Virgin; But *Justin Martyr* has

*Vid. Jos. Voisin Obs. in Proem. Pug. Fid. p. 124. Raymund Martin. Par. III. Dist. 3. cap. 7.*

*Galat. de arcanis, ver lib. 7. cap. 14.*



sufficiently proved, in his Colloquy with Tryphon, that this Prophecy could not be understood of *Hezekiah*; and from the Chronology of the Bible, it is plain that *Hezekiah* was Born many Years before this Prophecy was given. But to go on with the Jewish Opinions, about the Birth of the Messias from a Virgin. I will give you next the Authorities of two Jewish *Rabbies*, which to those who have not heard of them before, will be very surprizing; and which are most remarkable Proofs, both of the Divinity of Christ, and of his Birth of a Virgin; especially if those Authors, from whence these Authoritys are brought, lived, as *Galatinus* supposes, long before the Virgin *Mary* was Born. *Rabbi Simeon Ben Johai* in a Commentary upon *Genesis*, wrote in the Ancient Hebrew Tongue on the words: *Let us make Man after our own Image*, among other things, says &c. פנים בפנים Face by Face, or Person by Person, leads us to the knowledge of Faces or Persons. Mind what is the difference between the Ancient and the Junior of Faces. This is the JEHOVAH, who placed a living Face in the Woman, which Face is the Man from Life, proceeding from Life. This, moreover, is the Face of Paradise, wherein dwells the spirit of the Junior of Faces. But the Woman bends her knee and asks pardon

don of the spirit which is sent into her ; which spirit went out from the highest Throne of the Godhead to one particular Woman. And the spirit which went out, is the spirit of the Junior of Days, resting in the Delights of Paradise. And he is the Spirit of Lives, who of Old was prepared before time in the Son of David, to perceive Wisdom. And from this Woman, the spirit being awakened or roused up by a mighty power, he went out from an Unopened Womb, prepared to be the most High Prince. And he is the King Messias. Of whom it is Written, The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of Knowledge and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Fortitude, the Spirit of Wisdom and the Fear of God. These are the Four Ways in which this Spirit is to come ; and there is one only Spirit our JEHOVAH distinct from the three Faces. Rabbi Jose, said, In the days of King Messias, one shall not say to another, Teach me knowledge : Because it is Written, Hereafter one man shall not Teach his Brother, because all shall know me, from their little ones to their great ones. And in that time the Ancient of Days shall awake, and the spirit which goes out of the Shut or Unopened Womb. And when he shall arise, all the spirits shall rise with him. And who are they ? Those which are honoured with the Holy Crowns of the Junior of Faces. Whither

or no these *Rabbies* lived before Christ, as *Galatinus* supposes, matters not much; but however, they are Remarkable Instances of the Opinion of the Jewish Church, concerning the Divinity of the Messias and his Incarnation; and do deserve the serious consideration of the *Deists* and *Socinians*, and should Teach them more Civility than to deride these Doctrines of the Christian Church, of which there was such a manifest Tradition in the Jewish. Nor is this the singular Opinion of these two Ancient *Rabbins*; but others likewise declare, that the Messias was not to be Born after the way of Human Conception. *Rabbi Moses Hadarschan* on *Gen. 37. 12.* The Redeemer or Messias, whom I shall raise up unto you shall not have a Father, according to that of Zachary; Behold the man whose name is the Branch, and he shall grow up out of his place. And as *Isa. 53. 2.* He shall grow up before him as a tender Plant, and as a Root out of a dry Ground. And David says of him, *Pf. 110. 13.* Thy Birth is as the dew of the morning. So *R. Solomon Jarchi*, explaining this Psalm, says, That the Dew mentioned in this Psalm, which is a Prophecy of the Messias, is a Dew from the Lord, which does never come from man. And the like is said by *Bereschith Rabba* upon that of *Gen. 4. 25.* God has appointed me another seed

*seed instead of Abel.* It was a saying of *R. Tanchuma*, namely, *That seed which came from another Place.* And what is that? It is the King *Messias*. That is, the *Messias* was to come into the World not by the way of Mortal Conception. But I am afraid, *Philologus*, I shall Tire you with these *Rabbini-cal* Citations, which I know you have no affection for, but I thought them very proper to clear the way to the Explication of this Famous Prophecy concerning the Birth of Jesus Christ from a Virgin. And now I shall give you my Sense of the Meaning of the Prophecy, and how I think it had its Completion at the Birth of our Saviour Christ. I will not trouble you here with any bustle about First or Literal, and Secondary Senses of Scripture, a Fancy very much in Vogue ever since *Socinus* his time, who was for running all Prophecy into this Notion. I shall only shew what part of this Prophecy had its Completion in *Abaz* his time, and what at the Birth of Christ.

The Occasion of the Delivery of this Prophecy was this. About the beginning of *Abaz* his Reign, who was King of *Judah*, and Father of *Hezekiah*, *Rezin* the King of *Syria*, and *Peokah* the Son of *Remaliah* King of *Israel*, with joynt Forces, made a Descent upon *Judea*, and Besieged *Jerusalem*; in which,

which tho' they succeeded not, yet considerable Ravage was made over all the Country, especially by the King of *Israel's* Army, as is particularly Recorded in the Second Book of Chronicles. When *Abaz* and his Court were first Alarm'd by this Dreadful News, they were struck, as must be imagined upon such an occasion, by a very great Fear; or as the Prophet elegantly expresses it, *His heart was moved and the heart of his people, as the Trees of the Wood are moved with the Wind.* In the midst of this great Consternation, *Isaiah* the Prophet is sent as a Comforter to him; bidding him not be afraid of the Two Tails of those smoaking Fire-brands, to which he compares the Two Hostile Kings, assuring him that they should not prosper in their Cruel Enterprize. *Abaz* could not, it seems, frame himself to a Belief of so comfortable a Message: And therefore God was pleased so far to comply with him, as to promise him, that his Prophet, for his sake should do a Sign or Miracle to convince him of the Truth of what he delivered; nay he left it to the King's Choice to demand what Sign or Miracle he pleased. *Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.* *Abaz* remains incredulous still, and seems to have no Regard to what the Prophet said to him; only he returns him this Surly An-

Answer: *I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord.* At which Answer, the Holy Prophet seems somewhat concern'd, and therefore Rebukes him for his Incredulity; but still gives him hopes of his Deliverance: *Hear you now, O house of David! Is it a small thing for you to weary Men, but will you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign, behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his Name Immanuel. Butter and Honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the Evil and choose the Good. For before the Child shall know to refuse the Evil and choose the Good, the Land which thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her Kings.* Now all perhaps that *Abaz*, at that time, could be supposed to have understood by these words, is this: That there should a certain young Woman, then a Virgin, who should have a Son upon her first bringing forth, and before this Child should know Good from Evil, that is, be able to know the Benefits of Peace from the Miseries of War, that Invasion should be at an end; and the Child should eat *Butter and Honey*, that is, enjoy all the Pleasures and Satisfactions of a settled Peace. And the Prophecy in this Sense was compleated soon after. For in the next Chapter *Isaiah* says, *He went unto the Prophetess, and she conceived and bare a son; then said the Lord, call his Name Maher-*



Maher-shalal-hash-baz. *For before the Child shall have knowledge to cry my Father and my Mother, the Riches of Damascus, and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the King of Assyria.* This is a plain Historical Relation of a great deal of the Event of this Propheſie, and therefore it cannot be denied, but that it was in great measure understood of the Conception of this Young Prophetess which was espoused to *Isaiab*. And they have very little Reason on their side, who assert, that this Conception of *Isaiab's* Wife in the 8<sup>th</sup>. Chapter, has no Relation to the Propheſy in the 7<sup>th</sup>. whereas it is plain that almost every thing in the latter is said to fall out as it was Predicted in the former. He is Married to a *Virgin Prophetess*; and she *conceived and bare a Son*, which is Related in the very words of the Propheſy; and before this Child should arrive to a rational Knowledge, *Judea* was to be delivered from its Invaders. Only that Passage is Related a little differently; what is in the Propheſy of the 7<sup>th</sup>. Chapter, called, *The Childs knowing To refuse the Evil, and chuse the Good*, is in the 8<sup>th</sup>. expressed, by having knowledge to cry *my Father and my Mother*; and what in the 7<sup>th</sup>. is expressed by *the Land shall be forsaken of both her Kings*, is in the 8<sup>th</sup>. worded, *The Riches of Damascus, and the*

the Spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the King of Assyria. That is, the Great King of Assyria shall kill Rezin King of Syria, one of the Invading Princes, and Destroy Damascus his Capital City; and as for the King of Israel, his City shall be Plundered, and the King himself Murdered by his Successor; which came to pass within a Year or two, as the Prophecy foretold, *Vid. 2 King cap. 15. and 16.* which is tantamount to what is said in the 8th. chapter of *Isa. v. 1.* *The Land which thou abhorrest shall be Forsaken of both her Kings.*

I think it is plain, by what has been said, against all manner of exception; that this Passage had a great deal of its literal Completion in the time of *Ahaz*. But then I further contend, that these words must of necessity not only have another Mystical Meaning as some will have it, but do imply a great deal more in their Literal sense; or else there will be so many Improperities in the expressions, that we cannot suppose so Elegant and so Exact a Writer as *Isaiab* could be Guilty of. If we consider only the usual Purport of the Word *Virgin*, any one would be apt to think that something more was meant than *Isaiab* his Marrying a Virgin, who should afterwards have a Son. There is something very Emphatical and Surprising in

in the Words *a Virgin shall conceive* ; and it would certainly have been expressed *Isaiah or his Wife shall have a Child*, if no more was meant by it, than that ordinary Birth, which was before mentioned. It is ushered in with an Admiration, *Behold !* which would be a strange Impropriety of Speech, if no more was to be understood, than that a Male Child should be conceived after the usual way. Besides, here is the Name of the Child altogether as remarkable: *And shall call his Name Immanuel*, or God with us. Such a Name as This, imposed by God himself, is very Wonderful, and must needs import the Person it referred to, to be of a greater Character than that Obscure Son of *Isaiah*. Nay what Person in all Sacred History can be found, to whom this Name can with any tolerable Propriety agree ? Besides, our Blessed Saviour ; who was truly God with us, a Person of the Trinity, assuming Human Nature. You cannot say that this was the Name of *Isaiah* his Son, for he is said to be called upon his Birth *Mahershalal-basb-baz*, *Isa. 8. 3.* Therefore the Name *Immanuel* must refer to some other Person, who I say must be our Lord Jesus, because no other Person can be assigned besides, to whom this Name can with any congruity be ascribed to. And further, in this

Pas-

Passage it is said, *The Lord shall give you a Sign or a Miracle.* And what a mighty Miracle is it that a young Married Woman should have a Child? It was indeed a Remarkable Prediction, That the first Child should be a Male, and that *Judea* should be in an unexpected way Delivered by that time this Child should be a Year or two old. But then, I say, it does not at all seem proper that this Prediction should be brought in after such an unwonted manner, with a *Behold!* as if never such a thing happened before, whereas the Jews had many as much, or more Remarkable Deliverances than This from that Invasion. The Miracle or Sign, is said to be of God's own giving, *The Lord shall give you a Sign*, and therefore it must be expected that something more is couched under the Word, than the bare Prediction of this Temporary Deliverance. These Considerations weighed so much with the Ancient Jews and Christians, that they looked upon this Passage as a Prediction of the Messiah; because the Words could not be altogether applied to *Isaiab* his Son. I am very well assured, that such a way of *Interpretation* looks very odd to you, *Philologus*, who are only used to prophane Authors, among whom

*The Jewish  
Way of Expo-  
sition of Scrip-  
ture a Confir-  
mation of Chri-  
stianity.*

nothing

nothing like this is to be seen. But if you were conversant in Jewish Books, you would see in them a great deal of such Exposition, especially concerning the Messias; whom they say the Prophets are wont to reveal upon all Occasions, and to give many glancing Predictions of Him, oftentimes when their Subject engages them upon other matter. And therefore, when the Apostles draw Arguments from these sort of Predictions, which are occasionally brought in amidst the Prosecution of other matters, it shews them to be so far from Insincerity, or that their Writings are Suppositions; that it is a very clear Argument that their Works are Genuine, and their Consequences True. For what better Explication of any Text, to confirm an Opinion, could be expected, than the Exposition which had obtain'd for some Ages in a National Church? This would have all the Power imaginable to Convince, nor would it be lyable to the usual Objections of New Fangledness or Innovation. But if the Apostles had criticized upon the Passages of the Old Testament like our Modern Expositors, you perhaps would have liked it better upon first thoughts; but upon more serious consideration, their Writings would, upon this Account, have been Ten times more lyable to Exceptions than now

now they are. Suppose the Apostles should have explained Scripture by shewing the Sense of the Words, as they are used in other places of the Bible, by Quoting of *Lexicons*, and citing some Parallel Arguments out of Prophane Authors; who would ever have believed that such a Composition was made by one that, *Seventeen Hundred Years* ago, was Bred up amongst the Nation of the Jews, among whom such a sort of Learning was never in Fashion? If they had lay'd out their Labours after this manner, I am confident, *Philologus*, you would be the First Man that should have Arraigned the Imposture. But when such Men, as the Apostles were, of no Literature and Education, that never spent their Time in the Schools of the *Rabbies*, should explain the Predictions of the Messias just in their Way, should be such Eminent Masters in their Learning, and should confirm the Truth of their Lords *Mission* by their Adversaries own Arguments, and should be so excellently versed in their *Traditionary Explications* of the more remarkable Prophecies; this is a wonderful Confirmation of our *Religion*; and, give me leave to say, is a Total Overthrow of all the Cavils of the Modern Jews, and is the Glory and Triumph of Christianity.



.. I think there is no need to make any considerable stay for the Confutation of your Objection against the Sense of the Word *Gnalmah*, which you will not allow always to signifie a *Virgin*, from that Text in the *Proverbs*, cap. 30. v. 19, and 30. *There are Three Things which are too Wonderful for me, yea, Four which I know not : The Way of an Eagle in the Air, The Way of a Serpent upon a Rock, The Way of a Ship in the midst of the Sea, And the Way of a Man with a (Gnalmah or) Maid. Such is the Way of an Adulterous Woman : She Eateth, and wipeth her Mouth, and saith, I have done no Wickedness.* For it is not necessary to be granted, that the *Adulterous Woman* (in the Second Verse) should be the same with the *Maid* in the former : Nay, they seem to be perfectly different, and the First to be a Simile, or Illustration of the latter. For the Wise Man brings Three or Four Things which leave no Foot-steps or Traces behind them, as the Flying of Birds, which leaves no Trace in the Air ; the Creeping of a Serpent, which has no Feet to make an impression upon the Ground ; as the Sailing of a Ship, when the Water still closes up again as the Ship has passed through it ; and as the Way of a Man with a Maid, between whom there are usually such secret Courtships and Addresses

as they will not discover. And to these *Impervestigabilia*, which Men can find no Traces of, the Wise Man compares the Artifices of an *Adulterous Woman*, which are very handsomely set forth by the foregoing Illustrations. But what a Jest is it, that a thing should be compared to it self? as it must be, if the *Adulterous Woman* in the latter Verse, be the *Maid* in the former. Or how can any one think that the Wise Man could talk so little Sense, as to say, That an Adulterous Woman is like an Adulterous Woman? Which is such an odd sort of Childish Tautological Talk, as the Propriety of no Language, or any common Sense, will bear. And therefore, I wonder, how the Modern Jews should so Triumph, as they do, upon the use of the word *Gualmah* for a Lewd Woman in this place; since it must be a very forced Exposition of the Words to make it signifie so.

*Phil.* But must *Rachels crying for her Children*, *Jer.* 31. 15. and *Out of Ægypt have I called my Son*, *Hos.* 11. 2. be understood after this Typical way of Prefiguration likewise, or Prophetick Excursion, which you seem to hint at?

*Cred.* I told you before, *Philologus*, that several of these Passages might be fairly accounted for, by way of Accomodation;

and that St. *Matthew* here might only, perhaps, make use of the words of those Ancient Books, and put another Sense of his own upon them; which is very often used among all Writers. But for my part, I believe that these Texts, here quoted, were in our Saviour's time, generally by the Jews, looked upon as Predictive of the *Messias*, and as referring to some Passages of his life. Which can hardly be denied by any one who is acquainted with the Jewish way of Explication of Scripture; and, if there were many of their Ancient Books remaining, might, I doubt not, be most clearly evinced. And indeed, some of the Modern Jews grant us, that the Text of *Hosea*, *Out of Ægypt have I called my Son*, is understood of the *Messias*. For generally their

*Shemoth. Rabba.*  
Sect. 43. 44.

Commentators allow that this of *Hosea* II. 2. has the same Sense of *Psal.* 80. 9. *I have brought a Vine out of Ægypt*. And this last passage such a Wary Commentator as *Aben Esra* himself, in his Notes upon this *Psalms*, will have to be understood not only of *Israel*, but of the *Messias*.

*Phil.* And what do you say to those *Psalms* which are usually brought for Prophecies of the *Messias*, when they plainly appear only made upon *David* or *Solomon*?

*Cred.* Why, as for the Second Psalm, I say

say, that is a Prophecy of Christ ; and there are several Expressions therein, which are not only referred to *David* or *Solomon* in a Primary Sense, (as *Socinus*, *Grotius*, and others say) and to Christ in a Secondary Sense ; but are to be understood of Him principally and solely. I will not deny but that the Author of this Psalm designed it as a Poem upon *David's* being Settled in the Throne ; but the *Holy Ghost*, which assisted the Writer in the Composition, did so influence his Words as made him, at the same time, to drop such Expressions as should agree only to the Messias, and to be a Designation of Him and His Kingdom ; when perhaps the Inditer himself did not fully understand their meaning. For, by the way, I do not think that all the Prophets did understand the full extent and meaning of their Prophecies, when they first uttered them ; nor was it necessary they should : For *Daniel* says, *Dan. 12. 8. These*

*Things I heard, but understood them not.* It was sufficient to answer God's Design, that these Pro-

*The Prophe-  
tick Excus-  
sions Explained*

phesies should be fully understood after the coming of the Messias, when the remarkable Passages of his Life had given greater Light to them. For I make no doubt but, for the most part, the *H. Ghost* influenced the Prophets, especially the Psalmogra-

phers, in a pretty easie way, and as agreeable as might be to Nature ; he first suggested to their minds the Thoughts of Writing upon such a Subject, and then assisted them, as far as was requisite, in the Composition, oftentimes going along with, and little altering the Natural Chain of their Thoughts, and the Common Vein of Reasoning ; but when he had a mind to make them Prophesie of some extraordinary Decrees of God, as, *viz.* Of the Kingdom of the Messias ; He then runs off their Thoughts into some strange and surprizing Ideas, and makes them insensibly leave their first Subject for those new Turns of Thought which the Holy Spirit had inspired them with. He begins, if I may so speak, with a kind of inspired Reasoning, but proceeds to a sort of Extatick Revelation. And something like this is to be found not only among the *Heathen* Prophecies, but even the *Dithyrambick* or *Pindarick* Poems, which are an Imitation of Prophecies ; wherein upon the Heat and Fury of the Poet's Fancy, the former Subject is deserted, and the Thoughts do of a sudden run off upon a new Hint, which is started in the Imagination. And thus in the present Case, the Prophet sets himself to Write upon *David's* being settled in the Throne of *Israel*, and he does not  
pro-

prosecute this very far, but by a certain Impetus of the Divine Spirit, he is carried off from that Subject to the Nobler Theme of the Messias. It may be, the Prophet, whilst he was under the Workings of the Holy Spirit, might not comprehend the Tenor of the Transition, and might not understand the full meaning of the Words which were suggested; yet, 'tis probable, it was afterwards Revealed to him, as his Reason told him that it was a Propheſie of the Messias; and from hence arose those Traditions in the *Jewish Church*, which made them Interpret these Transitions with so Uniform an Agreement, as they did, of the Messias.

And having premised this, I will now shew you how all this is plain in the Composition of the II. Psalm. That *David* himself composed this Psalm, is evident from *Act. 4.*

II. Psalm a  
Propheſie of  
Christ.

25. where it is ascribed to him; and probably it was Composed not long after his being come to the Crown, when he had vanquished the Adherents of the House of *Saul*. He begins it, *Why do the Nations rage?* That is, those *Heathen Nations*, the *Philistines*, *Moabites*, &c. which made War against him not long after his succession to the Crown, 2 *Sam. 8.* and 10. *Kings and*



*Princes shall be of her.* He in the former part of the Psalm sets forth, That it was to no purpose, that so many powerful Enemies, Kings and Nations, as he calls them, had opposed themselves against him, who was the Lord's Anointed, and whose part God had espoused : For notwithstanding all their Opposition, God had Established his Kingdom, and set him King upon his Holy Hill of Sion. And after this manner he goes on to verse 7. and there he makes a most surprizing Excursion ; and all of a sudden brings in God Almighty himself speaking from Heaven. *I will declare the Decree, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee, &c.* And now what a strange Excursion and Abruption in the Sense is this ? If the Prophet had only gone on upon the ordinary Subject he was upon before, there would be no need of this unusual Introduction of the Deity, with this Speech, *I will declare the Decree, &c.* (*i. e.*) I will (as some explain it) open to you Mortals the Recondit Decrees of my Eternal Will, That King David shall still be King of Israel, now his Enemies are vanquished. What a poor jejune Interpretation of these Noble Words is *this* ? *This* is making a Mountain to teem with a Mouse ; *this* is to Father such an Absurdity upon an Inspired and a very Elegant

giant Writer, which would be insufferable in any Author whatsoever. No, certainly there is a more elevated Sense of the words than this. The inspired *Psalmist*, after he had given an Account in this Composition of his own Success in relation to the Crown of *Israel*, breaks out into another Field of Matter, and Sings afterwards of the more glorious Kingdom of the *Messias*: And begins with the Generation of this Great Person, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee*. These words were so improper to be attributed to *David*, that all the Ancient Jews explained them of the *Messias*\*, and this *R. Kimchi* Vid. Pocock. himself owns in his Comment not. Miscel. in Port. Mos. upon this *Psalms*, where he says *That these Words Thou art my Son, &c. have been explained by our Doctors of pious Memory, as a Prophecie of the Messias, and the Psalm is very clear being explained this way; but it is better to say that David spoke this of himself.* And we find, that not only these Jewish Rabbins but *St. Peter*, *Act. 4. 25.* and *St. Paul*, *Heb. 1. 5.* attribute this Passage to Christ, which they never would have done, if it had not been understood as a Prophecie of Christ in those times. And, if this be understood of Christ, the Sense is very Natural, and the Expression Proper. But, in what

what tolerable Sense, can God Almighty be said to Beget *David* ? Indeed, God Almighty is a common Father to us all, by reason of his Creating us, and Providing for us : But then no one says, upon this account, God Almighty *Begets* us ; but that he Made us, or takes Care of us. But *Dr. Hammond*, who, with *Socinus* and *Grotius*, is for running every Propheſie into a Primary and Secondary Sense, that he may with more Congruity apply these Words to *David*, brings in a like expreſſion, as he thinks, of *Spartian* the Historian, in the Life of *Adrian*, *Natalis adoptionis erat 5 Id. Auguſt. & natalis Imperii*. And ſo might *David*, if he pleaſed, have called his Inauguration-Day his Birth-Day, without any great Impropriety. But to ſay God begot him that Day, is ſuch an odd and unmannerly ſort of Metaphor, which neither *Spartian*, nor *David*, nor any other of tolerable Sense, can be ſuppoſed to be guilty of. But by the By, when the Apoſtle, *Heb. 1.* argues from this Wonderful Generation, the Superiority of Chriſt above all the Angels ; it is hardly decent for any Chriſtian to make this *Begetting* (eſpecially when it is uſhered in with ſuch a remarkable Preface) to be nothing elſe but God's placing *David* upon the Throne. God Almighty is Recorded

in Scripture to have done several Mighty Things for other Persons, but is never said to *Beget* them ; and no instances can be produced of this Nature : Besides, God Almighty is said to have given the Person here spoke of, *the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the Earth for his Possession*. But when was *David* in Possession of the uttermost parts of the Earth ? His Kingdom was bounded within the Territories of a small Country. And what Heathen Nations was he Governour of ? He Exhorts to *Kiss the Son*, which was the *Eastern* way of Adoration in Divine Worship, and therefore *David* cannot be supposed to require it to himself. Nay, what place in all Scripture can be alledged where any Person is called Emphatically *the Son*, besides Christ ? *Blessed are all they that put their Trust in him !* Now what a Blasphemous Expression is this for *David* to say of himself ! Any one who has lookt into *David's* Psalms, knows that it is his Doctrine, That Men should put their Trust only in God ; and therefore this Trust, which has such Blessedness entailed upon it here, must be a Trust in God, and not a Trust in the Power and Defence of a Prince, which, in many places of Scripture, has a Curse entailed upon it : as particularly *Jer. 17. 5. Cursed is he who Trusteth in Man.*

*Man.* All these are such manifest Characters of the Messias, and can so little agree to *David*; that any impartial Reader must allow some other Person to be understood here, which the Church of God, in all Ages has agreed to be the Messias. I will now only give you some Cursory Reflections upon the LXXII. & CX. *Psalms*, which you object against; and then I hope I shall have cleared this matter pretty well.

As for the LXXII. *Psalms*,  
 LXXII. *Psalms*, I own it might be a Design of  
 a Prophecie of *David*, when he composed  
 it, to Write of his Son *Solo-*

*mon*, after he had been Anointed for his Successor in the Kingdom by *Zadock*; and *David*, his Father, had seen him publicly inaugurated, 1 *King*. I. I. And therefore King *David* designs to make use of this Psalm as a Form of Prayer, to commend his Son to the Blessing of God, upon that great Undertaking. But the Holy Spirit of God, which inspired this Prophetick Prince, carried off his Thoughts from his first designed Subject; and by some imperceptible means of moving his Mind, made him speak all along afterwards of the Messias. It is plain, that at first he began to Write of *Solomon* by this, Give the King thy Judgments, O God, and thy Righteousness

unto

unto the King's Son, v. 1. But then of a sudden he falls a describing the Kingdom of a Person, which is perfectly unlike that of Solomon. *His Kingdom shall last as long as the Sun and Moon endures, throughout all Generations*, v. 5. And Universal Peace and Righteousness is said to be in his days, v. 7. and 8. When did Solomon's Government extend to the ends of the Earth, v. 8. and all Nations serve him? v. 11. How can it be understood of this Prince, that all Nations should be Blessed in him; when perhaps half the Nations of the World never heard of him? Now these considerations weighed so much with the Jews, that they in all Ages have explained this Psalm of the Messias. And I question not but David himself, when he uses the Words *all Nations of the World should be Blessed in him*, had regard to that Old Promise of the Messias to Abraham, Gen. 18. That in his Seed should all the Nations of the Earth be Blessed. The Two Jewish Commentators R. Obadiab, and Aben. Ezra, say this Psalm is a Prophecie of the Messias. And the Midrash or Exposition upon the Psalm, upon these words *Give thy Judgments to the King*, says, *This is the King Messias*. And in the Talmud, when the Question is asked, What is the Name of the Messias? It is answered



Vid. Glaffii Phil.  
Sacr. p. 99.

answered *Jinnon*, from the 17th. verse of this Psalm, *His Name shall endure for ever.* And *R. Solomon Jarchi*, and *Kimchi* say, that all their old *Rabbins* explained this Psalm of King *Messias*; and *Kimchi* particularly says, that this is properly to be understood of the *Christ*, but hyperbolically only of *Solomon*.

But as for the CX. Psalm I look upon that, from the beginning to end, to be a Propheſie only of *Christ*. And so did those who lived about the time of the Preaching of the Gospel; as appears by that Question of our Saviour to the *Pharisees* about the *Messias*, out of this Psalm: *The Lord said unto my Lord, &c.* If David call him Lord, (says he) how is he his Son? Which plainly shews that the *Jews*, to whom he put this Question, explained this Psalm of the *Messias*. And so this Psalm is explained of *Christ*, *Heb. i. 13.* and *10. 13.* And so likewise it is interpreted by *Trypho* in *Justin Martyr*. And though some of the Modern *Jews*, out of spight to *Christianity*, have interpreted this Psalm, as wrote upon *Abraham* or *Melchizedeck*, though without any ground; yet there are not wanting some of them who attribute it to the

the *Messias*. Although the *Midrash* upon the *Psalms* interprets this of *Abraham*, *The Lord said unto my Lord*, &c. Yet it is added, *And this is likewise the speech of God to the Messias*. R. *Obadiah*, upon this *Psalms*, explains the whole of the *Messiah*; so doth R. *Saadia Gaon* upon *Daniel*; and so do Two Ancient Rabbins R. *Barachias*, and R. *Levi*, quoted by R. *Moses Ben. Nachman*. It is plain, therefore, that the most unprejudiced and Ancient *Jews* have interpreted this *Psalms* of the *Messias*, as well as the *Christians*; and if you attentively consider the matter, you will find they had great Reason so to do. For the Title of this *Psalms* says it is a *Psalms* of *David*, and therefore *David* must be the Person that speaks. And now see if any other tolerable Sense can be put upon the Words, but that which the generality of *Christians* and Ancient *Jews* understood them in: *The Lord said unto my Lord*, &c. What Person, besides the *Messias*, could *Jehovah* speak unto, whom *David* could properly call *Lord*; and with a particular Emphasis, *my Lord*? He was an independent Prince, and ow'd subjection to no one in the World, and therefore he cannot be supposed to call any one *Lord* but a Person of the *Godhead*, who was the *Supream Lord* of all Things. The *Apostle*  
*Heb.*

*Heb. 1. 13.* does very well Argue, that it is a Character above that of the Supream Angels, to say to any one *Sit thou on my Right Hand*, & agreeing only to that of the Eternal Son of God. Who besides our Blessed Saviour could be said to be *a Priest for ever*? Surely, no not *David* himself, in whose time there was no Priesthood known but the *Aaronical*, and when no such unwonted Honour as the *Melchizedechian* Priesthood was ever heard of? For the same Person to be a King and a Priest, was a thing never used in those times; and therefore must be referred to the time of the Messias. Under the Old Law the Priesthood was a Thing perfectly distinct from the Kingly Office; and we find, *2 Chr. 26. 20.* that King *Uzziah* was smote with a *Leprosie* for his Usurping it. And therefore I cannot but wonder at the Perverseness of some of the Modern Jews, who will, with so much force and straining, Interpret this Psalm otherwise than of the Messias, contrary to the universal Opinion of their Fore-fathers, and in opposition to all common Sense. And, as I observed to you before, I cannot but as much admire, how much the Truth of the Christian Religion doth display it self, in making use all along the New Testament of those Ancient Traditionary Explanations

plications of the Prophecies, which were from the first uttering of them retained in that Nation; whilst many of the *Jews* themselves, pertinaciously to defend their Errors, have been forced to desert them.

*Phil.* But by the By, *Credentius*, I do not find any Fault in the *Jews* for this; for it is never a Crime to Rectify an Error, and if they found their Ancient Explications would not hold Water, let them find out some other Expositions that will. That Old Traditionary *Faith* of theirs, which you, it seems, set so much by, was as much run down by Jesus Christ: And for my part, I cannot think but these strained sort of Expositions, you have dwelt so long upon, are as Ridiculous as their washing of Platters and Cups, and their false Notion of the Temporal Kingdom of the *Messias*.

*Cred.* You mistake the Matter, *Philologus*, for our Saviour does not find any Fault with the *Jewish* Explication of the Prophecies, but with their false Glosses upon several Moral Duties of the Law, and taking more care to be exact in Legal and Ritual Performances, than in a good Life. He Endeavours to set them right in the Nature of the Kingdom of the *Messias*, telling them *it was not of this World*, when they

G

grossly

grossly *imagin'd* it was to be a *Temporal Kingdom*. And in these points their false Comments, which they vouched Ancient Tradition, though fallly. For, they needed rectification and amendment; but you do not find that our Saviour ever blames them for ill explaining the Prophecies, and taking those Places for Predictions of the Messias which were not. These were things, which they received in their Books and Traditions uncorruptly from their Fore-fathers; because no Byass of any corrupt affections, or sinister ends could give them temptation to make any variation in them. Nay, the Notions of the Messias, long before the coming of Christ, were so usual among the Jews, and the common Places, where he was predicted in the Old Testament, so obvious and so universally explained in the same manner; that it was impossible they should prevaricate in this matter, if they would: All Parties were agreed in these Things, neither Christ nor His Apostles find Fault with the Jews for their Explications, nor the Jews blame them for their Citation of Texts, in the sense their Church had explained them. The Jews at that time never had the hardiness to dispute whether those Texts were Predictions of the Messias; but whether those Characters did agree to *Christ*

or

or no ; for the other Matters were incontrovertibly allow'd, till the Modern *Jews* and the other Incredulous, have put the Christians upon the Proof of them.

*Phil.* But still, my good Catechist, you must bring some more evident Prophecies of Christ than these you have alledged, or else, notwithstanding all the pains you have laid out upon me, I shall remain in the Depth of Infidelity still. These Predictions, you have already been discoursing of are clear only to some dull *Talmudical* Brains ; and are proper only to convince the Musty Rummagers among the *Rabbins*, who are wont to take every thing for a rare Argument, which they find in an old *Hebrew* Book. If these Passages are Prophecies of Christ they are such slender Glances by the By, that People, who have not a great Deal of Credulity before hand, will hardly be convinced by them. Let us see, I pray then, something more directly Prophetick, that may not look so like a Poetical Ramble of Thoughts as most of these do.

*Cred.* It is impossible I should have time to shew you, How all the Prophecies, which lie every where scattered in the Old Testament, do exactly agree and

*Prophecy of the  
Call of the  
Gentiles veri-  
fied in Christ.*

con-center in our blessed Saviour ; for



that would require a longer time than You and I shall have Patience to talk together, and you may at your leisure see them made out at large in Commentators upon the Bible and other learned Defenders of the Christian Faith. I shall only pick out two or three of the most remarkable Predictions, and urge them home against the Unbelievers.

And first, I shall begin with the famous foretelling of the *Calling of the Gentiles*, and Gods manifesting the true Religion to them. Every one, that understands any thing of the History of the Jews, knows, how great an aversation they bore to the *Heathen* nations, and what dreadful Judgments their Prophets, even with a seeming Spirit of Joy, denounce against *Edom* and *Aegypt*, &c. and yet 'tis plain, that these very Prophets in the same breath almost, that they are foretelling these horrid Punishments which will befall those People, they frequently fall into a strain of predicting the greatest blessings upon them; foretelling. that in a while, they shall be a People as dear to God as the *Jews* themselves, and that they shall have the true Religion, which they had been so long strangers to, planted among them. The very way of Predicting such blessed Events to Hostile Nations is very astonishing and without precedent; but that these  
should

should exactly be compleated, according to the Prediction, is perfectly Miraculous. Suppose *Thirty* or *Forty* Biggotted Divines of the *Romish* Church, that had lived in different Times and Places within these 150 Years last past, since the Preaching of *Luther*, should after having said an abundance of hard things against the *Protestants*, say, that notwithstanding all this, These hated *Protestants* shall be in a little while, God's peculiar Favourites, and the present Form of the *Romish* Church shall perfectly be destroyed, and the *Protestants* be all in all; and if there shall be any Sticklers for the present *Roman* Church, they shall be hated and persecuted by God, and dispersed over the Face of the whole Earth: And then supposing this should come to pass in the next Generation, exactly as these Men had foretold in all the particular circumstances, Who would not allow, that these Men had not fore-told these Matters by the assistance of a Super-natural Power; or that God had not Predicted the Down-fall of Anti-christ's Kingdom by the Lips of his own Priests, tho at the same time it was their Desire and Interest to support it? I don't by this make any Comparison between the Church of the *Jews* and the Church of *Rome*, in relation to Errors, but only I say

the *Jewish* Prophets had as much aversion to their Heathen Enemies, as the *Papish* Priests have to us *Protestants*, and therefore could be supposed to Propesie nothing in their Favour; and there being so many of them of different Times and Places, that all Propesie of the same Event, therefore it could not be a Random Guess, the which might chance to come to pass: And their Interest being so much engaged in the welfare of their own Church, they could never be supposed, unless by the particular interposition of God, to harbour a Thought of the Alteration, much less of the Dissolution of it. But yet notwithstanding all this, we see nothing is so common among all the Prophets, as the Predictions of the *Call of the Gentiles*, and those other Events which ensued upon it. This is the constant Theme of all the Prophets, down from *Moses* to *Malachy*. *I will move them to jealousy with those that are not a people, and will provoke them to anger with a foolish Nation;* says God; *Deut. 32. 21.* That is, the Jews shall after a time be no longer God's peculiar Favourites, and that formerly Beloved Nation, shall with Envy and Grief behold Nations, which He heretofore seemed to slight, taken into His particular Love and Favour. *Time shall be,* says Holy David,

*David, when all the Ends of the World shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the Kindreds of the Nations shall worship before Him, Psal. 22. 27. The whole Book of Isaiah is full of the Predictions of this particular Thing. It shall come to pass (says he) in the Last Days, that the Mountain of the Lord's House shall be established in the top of the Mountains, and shall be exalted above the Hills, and all Nations shall flow unto it, &c. If. 2. v. 2, and 3. Arise, shine for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee; and the Gentiles shall come to thy Light, and Kings to the Brightness of thy Rising, If. 20. v. 12. 3. I was sought of them that asked not for me, &c. If. 65. 1. Sing O Barren, for more are the Children of the Desolate than of the Married Wife, saith the Lord, If. 54. 1. And more particularly cap. 19. v. 21. The Lord shall be known in Ægypt, and the Ægyptians shall serve the Lord. And in the 44. chapter, God promises to give a Saviour or Messias both to Jews and Gentiles. To raise up the Tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my Salvation to the end of the Earth. And in the 42. cap. speaking of the Messias, God saith, Behold my Servant whom I uphold, &c. I the Lord have called thee in right-*

ness, &c. I will give thee for a Covenant of the People, for a Light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, &c. And he ushers in this matter, as if he was saying the most incredible thing in the World. *Behold, new things I declare, before they spring forth I will tell you of them, &c.* and then he says, *he will bring the blind by the way he knew not;* as before, that *the Isles shall wait for God's Law*, v. 4. And so the other Prophets, *In that day, saith the Lord, I will assemble her that halteth, &c.* Mic. 4. v. 6. *And the Lord shall be King over all the Earth, and in that day shall there be one Lord, and his Name one.* Zach. 14. v. 8. *From the rising of the Sun unto the going down of the same, my Name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place Incense shall be offered to my Name, and a pure Offering;* for *my Name shall be great among the Heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts*, Mal. 1. 11. Now I pray you, Was ever any thing more plainly Predicted than the Manifestation of the True Religion to the Gentiles, and that by so many Men who lived in such different Ages? If they had lived at one time they might have been said to have com-plotted together; but for so many Writers, so many Ages distant from each other, all to Predict the same thing, and that

that so unlikely an one to come to pass, as the Call of the *Gentiles*; and this thing to happen exactly as they foretold it, does unexceptionably shew, that it was owing only to the Eternal Fore-knowledge of God, that was pleased to reveal the secret Workings of his Providence to the Prophets, so many Ages before it was display'd,

*Phil.* But it may be, this Prediction, as you call it, was only a Lucky Guess which Chanced to come to pass, as, once in a Hundred Times, such a thing may happen.

*Cred.* But then how came so many different Men, at such different Times, all to lite upon the same Guess? Men whose Prediction only consists in Guessing, Guess only at something that is probable to happen; as that there shall be Frost or Snow in *January*, and hot Weather in *July*; but no one would ever Guess of Walking over the *Thames* in *Summer*. Nor would it be less extravagant for a *Jew*, Two Thousand Years ago, to have Guessed at the *Call of the Gentiles*. For how could it ever come into such an one's Head to think that the Prophane Heathen Nations, which he had been taught from his Cradle to have such an Abhorrence of, many

*Call of the Gentiles no random Guess of the Prophets.*



ny of which God Almighty had solemnly Cursed, and which they were commanded to the utmost of their power to destroy; to think that these Execrable Nations should ever become God's Favourites and People; or that ever those many Countries would condescend to receive a Religion from the *Jews*, who were so hated and despised by all the World? These were such strange things, tho they did really come to pass, that could never enter into any ones Thoughts to imagine before-hand; and therefore could be revealed only by the Prophetick Spirit of God.

*Phil.* What is your next Prediction?

*Glory of the Second Temple, Hag. 2. 7. a Prophecy of Christ.*

*Cred.* Why, I think it is a Remarkable Prediction of the Prophet *Haggai*, 2. 7. That Christ should come

during the Second Temple. For by the Second Temple the *Jews* understood the Administration of Ecclesiastical Affairs after the Captivity, and not the bare Walls of *Zerubbabel's* Temple; for tho *Herod* the Great in his Time, re-built the Temple in a more splendid manner, it was counted the Second Temple still, in opposition to that more famous Oeconomy of Ecclesiastical Matters, which flourished whilst the First Temple

Temple was standing. Now it was the Prediction of *Haggai*, and the general expectation of the Jews, that under this second Temple the *Messias* was to come. *I will shake all Nations, and the desire or expectation of all Nations shall come, and I will fill this House with Glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. The Glory of this latter House shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts.* And *Malachi*, who lived at the same time with this Prophet, after the Dedication of the second Temple, Prophesies to the same purpose. *The Lord whom they look for shall suddenly come into his Temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant whom they delight in, behold he shall come saith the Lord of Hosts.* Now 'tis hardly possible that any Prophesie could be more exactly accomplished than these are in the Person of our Blessed Saviour. *I will shake all Nations.* And what a mighty Convulsion of the Affairs of the World were there between the penning of this Prophesie, and the coming of Christ? How was the *Eastern* World turned upside down by the Victorious Arms of *Alexander the Great*? And such a mighty Change made in all those Nations, as was never known before? And not many Ages after, How were the *Grecian* Princes, which were his Successors, subdued

dued to the *Roman* Empire, which either crushed them or deposed them at its pleasure, and the poor Jews forced to undergo all Hardships which their unmerciful Conquerors would put upon them, till at last their City and Government were utterly destroyed?

*And the Expectation of all Nations shall come.* 'Tis plain, that not only the Jews expected a *Messias*, but all other Nations for a considerable time before the coming of *Christ*, did expect about that time that He was Born, that a Great Person of an extraordinary and unknown Character, should come into the World. Something of this was supposed to be found in the *Sybillize* Books, and other Prophecies which went about, which made *Virgil* attribute them to

*Pollio's* Son. *Suetonius* says, *percre-*  
*Suet in* *buerat Oriente tota vetus, & constans*  
*Tito.*

*Opinio esse in fatis, ut Judæa profecti-*  
*rerum potirentur.* There was frequent over the whole East an old and constant Opinion, that the Fates had decreed, that some coming out of *Judea* should Govern the World. And *Tacitus* the like. *Pluribus persuasio inerat antiquis sacerdotum libris contineri, eo ipso tempore fore ut Valesceret Oriens profectiq, Judæa rerum potirentur.* A great many were persuaded that it was contained in the ancient

Books

*Books of the Priests, that at that particular time the East should prevail, and that some coming out of Judea should Govern the World.* Is not this a very clear Propheſie of that prevailing Opinion then in the World? If you were able to give any tolerable Account of that Opinions obtaining in that Age, yet how ſhould *Haggai*, who lived ſo many Hundred Years before, come to know it, and to ſpeak ſo clearly of it? If you ſay this was the general Opinion in *Haggai's* time too, it makes the Propheſie more Ancient ſtill, and is a firmer Proof of our Saviour's being the Meſſias, becauſe from all time out of mind the Jews expected the Meſſias to come into the World juſt at the time when *Chriſt* did.

Again, *I will fill this Houſe with Glory, and the Glory of this latter Houſe ſhall be greater than that of the former.* And what tolerable Senſe can be put upon theſe words beſides the coming of the Meſſias? As to the Structure and Utenſils, and all other Matters relating to it, it was a poor inſignificant thing to the firſt Temple; ſo that you can't take this to be the meaning of the Prophet, unleſs you will make him contradict himſelf within two or three lines; for v. 3d. of this chapter he ſays, *Who is left among you that ſaw this Houſe in her firſt Glory?*

Glory? And how do you see it now? Is it not in your eyes, in comparison of it, as nothing? Nay all the Miraculous Powers and Dispensations, which rendered the first Temple so glorious, were all wanting in the second, as the Jews themselves own; the *Urim* and *Thummim*, the *Ark*, the *Oyl of Unction*, the *Schechina*, &c. Now what can make amends in the second Temple for all these Defects, so that it can with any Propriety be said to exceed the Glory of the first, but only the coming of the *Messias*; That *Messias* the Blessed J E S U S, who was the *Prince and Lord of Glory*, who manifested his Glory to us, and we beheld it as the Glory of the only begotten Son of God, and who has laid up for us an *Eternal Weight of Glory*? And from this and other Prophecies, it was the general Opinion of the Jews, that about the latter end of the second

Temple the *Messias* should  
*Vid. Galatinum.* come; now because about the  
*lib. 4. c. 11.* latter end of that Temple no

Body, besides our Saviour, had any tolerable Pretence to be the *Messias*, therefore our Saviour is the *Messias*. This Argument is so plain and home upon the Jews, who by their Prophecies did always expect the *Messias* under the second Temple, that they are forced to make use of this silly

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Subterfuge to evade it, viz. That the very Day wherein the Temple of *Jerusalem* was destroyed, the *Messias* was Born. As appears by that of *R. Samuel* in *Berishith Rabbah*, *How do you prove that the Messias was Born in the same Day the House of the Sanctuary was destroy'd? Because it is said in the 66. chap. of Isaiah, Before she Travailed she brought forth; before her pain came she was delivered of a Male-Child.*

And when they are urged upon this, that no other *Messias*, but that of the Christians, appears to have been born in the World about that time; they are forced to say, That he stays at *Rome* among the Leprous there. As is plain by the Book *Sanedrin*, *When appeared the Messiah? Go and ask him: Where does he make his stay? In the Gate of Rome. What is his Sign? He sits among the poor and infirm (i. e.) the Lepers, according to that of the 53d of Isaiah, He was wounded for our offences, and bore our infirmities, and we reputed him a Leper. The Lepers open one Wound, and bind up another, and so does the Messias, nor will he do otherwise, lest he should be brought back.*

'Tis plain therefore, That the *Jews* are fully convinced that the *Messias* was to come about the Time our Saviour did, before the Destruction of the Second Temple,



ple, according as these Prophecies did foretell; and therefore not being able to deny the meaning of the Prophecies, they are forced to be at the expence of a Ridiculous Lie about an unknown Messias, which nobody ever heard of but out of the *Talmud*. If they had been able to have said any thing else against these Predictions, they would; for 'tis plain, it must be the last Refuge they could fly too, to stop the Mouths of Christians, to take up this foolish and groundless Fiction.

*Phil.* I see you are a very warm Advocate for the Prophecies. What Prophetick Confirmation of our Faith comes next in Order?

*The 52d. and 53d. cap. of Isa. a Prophecy of Christ.*

*Cred.* Why I think the 52d and 53d Chapter of *Isaiah*, to be a very plain and unexceptionable Prophecy of our Saviour, and which has been most exactly accomplished in him. *Behold my Servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted, &c. Isa. 52. 13.* Which is the beginning of the Prophecy, and which *Jonathan Paraphrases* thus, *Behold, my Servant the Messias shall be prospered, exalted and multiplied and greatly fortified.* And so did other Ancient Rabbins explain the same of the Messias, as is to be seen in those Ancient Pieces *Tanchuma* and

and *Siphre*, whose Fragments *R. Simeon*, the Author of the Book *Jalcut* has collected, and in the Book *Pesikta*; and among the Moderns in *R. Moses Alshech*, &c.

*And Note that the Explication of Tanchuma, upon the 13. verse is* Hulfil Theol:  
Jud. p. 318.

very Remarkable. *Behold my Servant shall be Exalted, &c. This is King Messias, he shall be greatly advanced, he shall be advanced above Abraham, above Moses, above the Angels of the Ministry.* And all along after, there is such a plain Description of the Exinanition, the Glorification, and the Satisfaction of Christ, that if it was to be wrote since his appearance in the World, it could hardly be more exact. Of whom, besides our Blessed Saviour, could it be thought such an incredible thing, to be Born, and suffer Afflictions, as the Prophet thinks it, when he ushers in this Prophecy with a *Who hath believed our Report?* cap. 52. v. 1. But it was a wonderful Prediction of the Messias, whom the Jews generally had the most Glorious Conceptions of, that He *should grow up like a tender Plant out of a dry Ground*, and that He should have *no Form nor Comeliness*, that He should be *Despised and Rejected of men, a Man of Sorrows; and acquainted with Grief*, v. 2, 3. Who besides our Blessed Saviour could be said to

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have

have borne our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows, to be wounded for our Transgressions, and bruised for our Iniquities; and that by His Stripes we are Healed? Who besides Him had no Deceit in his mouth? And was brought as a Lamb to the slaughter; and as a Sheep before the Shearer is dumb so he opened not his mouth; whilst all we, like Sheep, have gone astray, and have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the Iniquity of us all?

This is so plain a Prediction of our Blessed Lord, that the Jews have little or nothing to Object against it; and *Hulsius* says that he has been told by several Jews, That they could deal well enough with the Predictions of the other Prophets which are applied to Christ, if *Isaiab* would but hold his Tongue. And *Helvicus* reports, That many Jews have been Converted to Christianity by reading this Prophecy.

\* In Apend. and among others *Johannes Isaacus Levita*, as he himself confesses in his *Defensio Veritatis Hebraice*. And therefore I am very sorry to find *Grotius* so far complying with the Jews, as to come in with this pitiful Explication of this Noble Prophecy, *Præius congruunt hæ Notæ in Icremiam, potius sublimiusq; in Christum*. These marks agree first to the Prophet Jeremiah, and

in

*in a better and sublimer Sense to Christ.* For there is no manner of ground for any one to surmise, that the Prophet ever thought a word of *Jeremiah*, when he indited this Prophecy. Or how can any one think, that *Isaiah* should say so many great and wonderful Things of a Prophet, who was, in all respects, Inferiour to himself? What was there so stupendous in the Birth of *Jeremiah*, as should make *Isaiah* cry out here, *Who shall Declare his Generation?* This can agree only to the Eternal Generation of our Blessed Lord. How are we Healed by *Jeremiah's* Stripes? And what Prophet was ever made a Vicarious Punishment for the Sins of the People?

Nor will the Exposition of some other Modern Jews, who apply this Prophecy to the Jewish Nation, *Be of more Validity.* For how should the Prophet ever come to express that Refractory People, who were always so Stubborn, under their Afflictions by a *Lamb that openeth not his mouth?* When that Nation was so often Reproved by the Prophets for their Enormous Sins, How could they be said to *Have done no Violence; neither to have any Deceit in their mouth?* How could the Jews, who were God's People, be said to be *Stricken for the Transgressions of God's People?* This is to make the

same Jews to be both Innocent and Transgressors, to Suffer and not to Suffer at the same time ; which is such horrible Nonsense as is not to be endured.

*Phil.* I confess I am more puzzled with this Chapter, than any other place I know of, and when I am more at leisure, I will give it a more attentive Consideration than I have hitherto done. And now, Sir, will you be pleased to proceed to some other Prediction.

*Cred.* Next, Sir, I desire you would Reflect upon that Wonderful Prophecy contained in the II. VII. VIII. and IX. Chapters of *Daniel*. I pray you attentively to consider, how evidently he sets forth the Four great Monarchies of the World ; First, By the Interpretation of *Nebuchadnezzar's* Dream, Cap. II. And then again,

*The Monarchies  
and Weeks in  
Daniel Prophe-  
cies of Christ.*

By the Representation of the Four great Beasts, Cap. VII. and VIII. How should it ever enter into *Daniel's* Thoughts, unless assisted by the fore-knowing Spirit of God, that the Kingdom of *Persia* should be Destroyed by *Alexander* the Great, or the King of *Grecia*, as it is plainly set down, *Dan.* 8. 21 ? That upon the first King of *Grecia's* Death, several Kingdoms should arise out of his Conquests ? v. 21.

And

And that *In the latter time of their Kingdom,* (i. e. of the Grecian Monarchy) *when the Transgressors are come to the full, a King of fierce countenance, and understanding dark Sentences shall stand up; and his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power, and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper and practise, and shall destroy the mighty, and the Holy People. And through his Policy he shall cause Craft to prosper in his hand, & he shall magnifie himself in his heart, and by Peace shall destroy many, he shall stand up against the Prince of Princes, but he shall be broken without hand, &c. Dan. 8. 23.* Which is a perfect Description of the Power, the Pride, and Craft of King *Antiochus*, one of the *Seleucidae*; as also of his Unmerciful Cruelty to the Holy People, or the Jews, and of his remarkable Death; as you may find them Recorded in the Books of the *Maccabees*, and in *Josephus*. But this is not all, for after the Prophet has been fore-telling of the Successions of these Four Earthly Monarchies, he begins to tell of the Heavenly or Spiritual Kingdom of Christ. *And in the days of these Kings shall the God of Heaven set up a Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, and the Kingdom shall not be left to other People, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these Kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever*



*Forasmuch as thou sawest that the Stone was cut out of the Mountain without Hands, and that it brake in pieces the Iron, the Clay, the Brass, &c. Dan. 2. 44. And when in the VII. Cap. he speaks of the same Monarchies under the representation of Beasts, he says: As concerning the rest of the Beasts they had their Dominion taken away, yet their Lives were prolonged for a season and time. I saw in the Night Visions, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him: And there was given him Dominion and Glory and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations, and Languages should serve him: His Dominion is an Everlasting Dominion, which shall not pass away, and his Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. And again, The Saints of the most High shall take the Kingdom, and possess the Kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. Now what greater Evidence can be required of the Truth of the Christian Religion, that so many Hundred Years before, it should be Predicted, That, in the time of the Fourth of these Great Monarchies, or the Roman Empire, the Kingdom of the Son of Man, or Jesus Christ, should be Established, which should continue for ever? It is very Wonderful that Daniel, who lived in so early*

early an Age, should fore-tell, so exactly, not only the Dissolution of the great Empire he then lived under, but of several others that succeeded upon it; and to give such a particular Description of K. *Antiochus*, and his Barbarous Usage of the Jews, as looks more like a History than a Prophecy. But it improves our Faith to a sort of Demonstration, to find this H. Prophet, so many Ages before, fore-telling the Success of the *Christian Religion*, and the Kingdom of Christ enduring for ever. If we suppose with you *Theists*, that all this was a rambling Guess, yet how could *Daniel* Guess at a thing he could not be supposed to think of? One could hardly suppose that a Man, who lived under the Power and Grandieur of one of the *Eastern* Monarchies, could ever think it should be destroyed by a King of *Grecia*, a poor inconsiderable spot of Ground in respect of Their vast Dominions, and at the time when *Daniel* lived very little known at *Babylon*? But it is inconceivable how it should enter into *Daniel's* thoughts to talk of a Spiritual Kingdom of Saints, or Good Men, at a time when as the minds of the Jews were set only upon a Temporal Kingdom, upon returning Home again, and being Victorious and Glorious in their own Country. How came he to

Guess that there should be a Person called the *Son of Man*, that *this* Person should have Dominion and Glory given by God? That *this* Person was to have a Kingdom, and that Kingdom to be of Saints, and those Saints of all Nations and Languages, and and the Kingdom to continue to the End of the World too? After this rate, one may Write a History as well as a Prophecy by Guess, in short the Great *Porphyry* was so confounded by the surprizing exactness of this Prophecy in Relation to the Four Monarchies and the Cruelty of *Antiochus*, that he was forced to Assert that the Author of the Book of *Daniel* lived after *Antiochus* his time. And I wonder why some of you *Deists* (to tread in your Master's steps) dont as well assert, that he lived since *Constantine*, when the Empire became Christian: For the Prophecy is altogether as exact about the Kingdom of Christ, as about either of the Monarchies. Nay, if we were at this day to contrive an Hieroglyphical Description of the Prevalency of Christ's Kingdom over the Powers of this World, and the fall of the Pagan Empires by the Progress of Christianity; how could one better express it than by *Daniel's Stone cut out of the Mountain without hands*, which brake in pieces the Images, which represented the

Four

Four Empires? What could be more strong and powerful than those Vast Monarchies, and yet the strongest of them, *viz.* that of *Rome*, that had subdued and proudly stood upon the Ruines of all the rest, laid out all its Force and Power and Policy against the Christian Religion, but was never able to Prevail against it? for notwithstanding this, *This Stone cut out of the Mountain without hands*, that was founded upon no Humane Art or Policy, a plain Institution of Religion without any Artificial Finery, propagated only by a few unlearned Fishermen, who, assisted by the Power of God, destroyed all the Pagan Worship throughout the *Roman* Empire, broke down their Images, demolished their Temples, and banished their gods, and never ceased till it had perfectly broke in pieces this Great and Gaudy Image, and had substituted in lieu of it the Spiritual Kingdom of Christ, which must endure to the End of the World.

This is a wonderful Prediction, and the more we consider it, the more we must admire it; and as for what follows concerning the Time of the Death of the Messiah, is as much the Subject of our Admiration, as likewise the Confirmation of our Faith. *After Threescore and Two Weeks, the Messiah shall*

shall be cut off, but not for himself, and the People of the Prince shall come, shall destroy the City and the Sanctuary, and the End thereof shall be with a Flood, and unto the end of the War Desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the Covenant for many for one Week, and in the midst of the Week he shall cause the Sacrifice and the Oblation to cease; and, for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate, even until the Consumation, and that Determined shall be poured out upon the Desolate, Dan. 9. 26, 27. Now if by these 62 Weeks, and the 7 mentioned before, which make up 69 Weeks, (which are fully to be compleat before the Great 70th. Week, v. 24. wherein these Remarkable Things are to happen) I say, if by these we are to understand Weeks of Years, as it must in some places of Scripture \*, that is 69 times 7 Years, or 474 Years, reckoning from the Time of this Prophecy to the Preaching of Christ, the Time will come very near to the Account of our ordinary Chronology, and perhaps if the Reigns of the Persian Kings, and some other particulars in History, were rightly Adjusted, this Computation would

Vid. Ez. Cap. 4.  
 Rev. 12. 6. 13.  
 5. and particularly Gen. 29.  
 27. Fulfill her Weeks, (i. e.) her Seven Years,  
 Levit. 29. 27.  
 Thou shalt number Seven Sabbaths, or Weeks, of Years unto thee.

would be exactly right. But it has pleased the Wise Providence of God, to suffer these Matters to lie in some manner of Confusion, that our Faith might be founded upon a Nobler Principle than that of Chronological Niceties : But yet the Prophecy, if attentively considered, carries as much weight with it, as if it agreed with the Chronological Tables to a day. Here are Predicted so many of the Principle Actions in the Life of Christ, as to their exact time, and other particularities, that after all the Subterfuges and Shifts which can be made, they can be attributed only to the All-knowing Spirit of God, that so many Ages before Revealed them to this Prophet.

*After the [Seaven and the] Threescore and Two Weeks, the Messias, &c.* How came Daniel to tell that about 490 Years after the Edict to Rebuild Jerusalem, one should lay claim to be the Messias? I grant it is very difficult, and has puzzled the Heads of Chronologers, to bring exactly these Weeks and the time of Christ's Suffering together, because of the different Accounts of the length of Kings Reigns, given by different Historians, and the different ways in Reckoning the beginnings and extent of Years in several Nations ; yet, I say, granting all this,



this, How should *Daniel* pitch upon the time of the *Messias*, so near as he doth, upon any Computation, to the Preaching or Suffering of *Jesus Christ*? Ten or a Dozen Years is no great matter here. You may think 'twas by chance; but this must be a very strange Chance, and much harder to be believed, than that *Daniel* had the Spirit of Prophecy. It is a good deal above Two Thousand Years ago since *Daniel* lived, and if his Prophecy was owing to Chance, he might as well have Conjectured the *Messias* to come in any other Part of this long time between the Date of his Prophecy and us, or any other Part of Time which the World shall last beyond us; he might have made him come long before or after our Saviour; but to nick in his Prophetick Conjecture just with the time of *Jesus Christ*, and so luckily to appoint the time of the *Messias* his coming when our Saviour lived, who not only laid claim to the Office of the *Messias*, but has been own'd as such by so many Myriads of Men, by such a number of Nations, and throughout so many Successive Ages; I say, for a Man so many Hundred Years before, to say, that the *Messias* should come just about the time of the Famous *JESUS CHRIST*, who has been so generally reputed the *Messias*,  
this

this is a thing hardly within the Power of Chance, and by all considering Men must be attributed to the Prediction of God's Holy Spirit.

But the Prophet does not only foretell the precise time when the Messias should come, but says something of him, which at that time it could have entered into no ones head to have suspected, That the *Messias should be slain*, or as it is in the Hebrew Phrase, *Shall be cut off*\*. 'Tis

plain by this Prophecy; that the Messias, who was to come into the World about this time, was to Die

\* *Accareth shall be cut off*, signifies, shall be slain, *Gen. 9. 11. Ezek. 21. 3. 1 Kings. 18. 13.*

too. Nay, the Unbelieving Jews themselves make this Prophecy yet clearer of our Saviour, when they say, The Messias shall not only Suffer, but shall be Killed by the Jews. The words of *Rabbi Simeon*, the Son of *Johai*, in the Book *Mekkar-hassodoth*, are very Remarkable. For there *Hosea* is brought in Weeping, and saying, *Wo to those, wo to those wicked unrighteous murderers of Israel, for the love of whom God shall send his own Holy Son, having put on Human Flesh, that he may forgive them their Sins. Wo to them for their wicked Actions, they shall be rebellious to the Messias, neither shall they regard the words*  
of

of him, who shall command them to be purified with the water of Purification, to expiate their sins; but they shall not walk in ways acceptable to God, but being enraged by a mighty Anger, shall kill him.

Nay further, this Prophecy foretells the satisfaction of Christ, and that Christ should Die for the Sins of the World, that he should be *cut off, and not for himself*. This could be owing to no fanciful Opinion of the Jews, for if it had its foundation from their fond Conjectures only, they would not have guessed him to have come into the World with this Character of Dying for their Sins, but to have made his Entry like a Triumphant Monarch, treading upon the Necks of their Enemies, freeing them from their forlorn Captivity, and bringing their Masters into the same Subjection which they groaned under!

This Prophecy doth moreover Predict, That after the Messias his Death, the City *Jerusalem*, after it was Rebuilt by *Cyrus* his Decree, should, at the end of the Seventy Weeks, together with the *Sanctuary*, be destroyed with a Flood or impetuous Torrent of Desolation; when the *Sacrifices and Oblations* should for ever cease. How can all these Predictions be attributed to any thing but to the Spirit of God? Was it possible for

for Mankind to have fore-seen any of these Contingences? Suppose that *Daniel*, being Converst in the Intreagues of the *Persian* Court, could possibly have fore-seen the Edict of *Cyrus* would come out for the Building of *Jerusalem*; yet how could he foresee that it should last but 490 Years after it? This was a little too much for any Politician to pretend to. Or, suppose that *Daniel* here had a mind to give out an unintelligible obscure Prediction, only to puzzle the Jews, and some part of it has chanced to come to pass. But I pray then, How comes *Daniel* to be so particular in his Prophecy? Such kind of Prognosticators love to talk as much as they can in the Clouds, they apply their Discourse only to general matters, as Wars, Seditions and Plots, &c. which happen almost every day, but they have a great care of Particulars as being too many to be guessed at, and, if one should unluckily fall out wrong, the Credit of the Predictor was ruin'd. Therefore no one can imagine that *Daniel*, or any other Man of ordinary Sense, should venture upon contriving a sham Prophecy with so many particularities in it, and those things so unusual, and so out of the Road of the common Hitt of Accidents, that it was Ten Thousand to One if any of them  
ever

ever came to pass. There was a great deal of Contingency in the Rebuilding of *Jerusalem*, after the Captivity ; and there was a great deal more in its being destroyed again 490 Years after that ; but there was a Thousand to One more odds, that it should not have the ordinary Fortune of other Ruinated Cities, in a while to be Rebuilt again, but that it should be forced to be for ever *Desolate to the Consumation* or End of the World. These are such a hardy sort of Conjectures, that the silliest Prognosticator (much less a Court Politician, as *Daniel* was) would not have ventured upon. It remains therefore, that so many different Events, so long before, and so particularly foretold, must be owing to the Divine Power, which designed them as a previous Light to Mankind, to give them a View of the Redemption by the Messiah before hand, and to be a lasting Evidence of the Truth of Christianity, which so many Ages before was so clearly Predicted. Do but seriously read over this Prophecy, & consider the time when the City was to be destroy'd, and that with a Flood and Torrent of Desolation, and never to be Built again, but the Sacrifices and Oblations should for ever cease: And Read the sad Story of this in *Josephus*, That Bloody War, and Lamentable Desolation

tion, and the dreadful Famine, Seditions and Murders which accompanied it; the Fire from Heaven, which Burnt their Temple, notwithstanding all Endeavours to the contrary, and after the Racing of the City, such a Dispersion of the People, as they were never able to return again; I say, if you seriously Read and Consider this, you must needs own, that this Prediction came from God, to whom the Circumstances of future Ages are only known.

But there is one Particular more in this Prophecy, which I forgot to mention, and yet is so Remarkable that I cannot pass it by. It is here said of the Messias, that *He shall confirm the Covenant with many for a Week*, and that *In the midst of the Week, He shall cause the Sacrifice and the Oblation to cease*. Which was most exactly Fulfilled by our Blessed Saviour, who by Preaching the Gospel for half One of these Weeks, or about Three Years and a half, *Confirmed the New Covenant with many*, instituted the Christian Religion, which was to save the Souls not only of the Jews, but of all other or *many Nations*; and in the middle of the Week submitted to the Death of the Cross, which



Abrogated all the Old Sacrifices and Oblations, which were only Types of this One great SACRIFICE for the Sins of the whole World.

Now to take all this together, one would think that all these Particulars, so exactly mentioned, look more like an History than a Prophecy; and 'tis a Wonder, considering the Plainness of it, that the Unbelievers dont pretend it was Wrote since Christ came into the World.

*Phil.* I confess, *Credentius*, there is something in this which a little shocks me at present, and which I cannot get over now; But hereafter, when I have leisure, I will give it a more Attentive Consideration, and weigh it Impartially: And therefore, in the mean time, if you have any thing further to urge upon this Head, I pray go on.

*Cred.* I will trouble you but with One Argument more, and that is the remarkable Prediction of the Place of *Christ's* Birth,  
Fore-

Fore-telling, That He should be Born at *Beth-lehem*, *Micah* the 5. chap. ver 2. *But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the Thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me, he that is to be a Ruler in Israel: Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.* That this Prophecy was understood by the Jews of Old as a Prediction of the Messias, is plain from *Mat. 2. 4, 5.* And when Herod had gathered all the chief Priests and Scribes of the People together, he demanded of them where Christ should be Born. And they said unto him, In *Beth-lehem* of Judah: For thus it is written by the Prophet; And thou *Beth-lehem, &c.* And it is plain likewise from the Writings of the Jews themselves, that some of them allowed, that the Messias was to be Born at *Beth-lehem*. *Jonathan*, the Targumist, upon these words of *Micah*, makes *Beth-lehem* to speak thus: *From my part the Messias shall come out.* And *R. Solomon Jarchi* says the same: And thou *Beth-lehem* hast deserved to be least of the Families of Judah, because of the Prophanation of *Ruth*, the Moabitish with thee; nevertheless, the Messias, the Son of David, shall go out of thee, as it is written, *Psal. 118. 22.* The Stone which the Builders refused is become the Head-Stone of the Corner. 'Tis plain therefore, it was the

expectation of the Jews, that the *Messias* was to be Born at *Beth-lehem*, from this Prophecy; and 'tis plain, that *Jesus Christ* was Born there, and therefore He has another undeniable Mark that HE is the *Messias*. *Grotius*, indeed, has endeavoured to prove, that the Person here primarily intended is *Zerubbabel*, being backed with the Authority of *St. Chrysostom*. But *Theo-*

*Theod.* in  
*Mic.* 5. 2.

*doret* has sufficiently confuted this Fancy, and proved that *Zerubbabel* was Born at *Babylon*. To this

*Grotius* replies, (with an Answer borrowed from *Kimchi*) that *Zerubbabel* was descended from *David*, who was Born at *Beth-lehem*. But then what Reason can be given, why *Zerubbabel* should be said to come from *Beth-lehem*, rather than from any other Town, where any of his Predecessors were Born? Why might not he be said, as well, to come out of *Aegypt*, where *Aminadab* and *Naasson*, out of *Jerusalem*, where so many of the preceeding Kings were Born, out of *Haran* of *Mesopotamia* where *Juda*, or out of *Ur* of the *Chaldees* where *Abraham* was Born? So that upon this Account, *Zerubbabel* must have had as many places of Nativity, as he has had Progenitors; and why *Beth-lehem* only should be mentioned is very unaccountable upon *Grotius* his sup-

position

position. But to pass over this. To whom, but the Messias, can be attributed this Character, *Whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting* ; which does plainly express the Eternal Generation of the Son by the Father ? Nor is this a fanciful Exposition of Christians, who have been accustomed to the Doctrine of the Trinity ; but an Ancient Author in *Talmud of Hierusalem*, explains this of the Generation of the Messias, which he says is *As a Dew from the Lord, and as Drops upon the Herb which does not expect a man.*

Now to take all these Prophecies together, and seriously to consider the Obvious Sense of the Words, and the Interpretation which the Jews constantly put upon them in Ancient Times, before they were prejudiced by their Hatred to the Christian Religion, to fly from their old Explication which they saw did so plainly favour us ; we cannot but think that our Saviour was manifestly pointed forth by these Predictions, so that nothing but Mens Corrupt Affections, or their Prejudices, could hinder them from owning him to be the true Messias, which was so Predicted. All the Offices of His Mediatorship were so plainly foretold, the time of His Appearance so exactly calculated before hand, and the whole World

was in such an Expectation of Him ; the Nature of His Kingdom is so plainly described, the time and manner of His Death is so particularly laid down, with all the dreadful Calamities which were to befall the Jews upon it ; almost every single Action of His Life is either by Type or Prophecy so clearly Predicted, the Calamities of His Life, and the Benefits of His Death, the Eternal Generation of His Godhead, His Immaculate Conception, nay, the very Place and manner of His Birth are so Historically almost set down ; that we cannot but adore the Almighty Goodness of God, that He is pleased to make our Faith so easy to us, which He has promised so liberally to Reward us for.

*Phil.* Pray, Sir, don't talk so much of the Easiness of Faith in this matter ; for make the best of these Things they are all dark mysterious Riddles. If God Almighty had a mind to give Mankind a previous Knowledge of the coming of Jesus Christ, He would have dealt very plainly with them and not have wrapt it up in obscure Enigmatical Veils, like the Heathen Oracles, and have left Men only blindly to guess at them ; he would have set them down in words at length, and not in mystical Figures : He would downright have told us that, in such

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a Year of *Augustus's* or *Herod's* Reign, Christ would be Born; that such a perfidious Wretch, as *Judas*, by Name, would in such a Year have Betray'd Him; that the *Sanedrim* of the Jews would have Plotted His Death, and that God would after so many years be revenged upon that People for their Barbarous Usage of Him, by the final Destruction of their City. This would be more agreeable to the simplicity and veracity of God, than to make use of such dark Oracles, which, like waxen Noses, may be turned any way a Man pleases.

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*Cred.* Not too fast, good *Philologus*. God-Almighty designed Faith to be a Virtue, to depend in great measure upon the Determination of a rightly disposed Will, and not to be the necessary Result of our Intellects. The

*Reason why  
Prophecies are  
something Ob-  
scure.*

*Divine Wisdom* does not think fit to make us Believers whether we will or no, or by such a Compulsive Evidence of Truth force us to assent to these Predictions, or the other Subjects of Revelation, as necessarily as we must do to such a Proposition as this, that *Two and Two make Four*. Our Salvation is to be attained by a Reasonable Faith, which no Good and Considering Man has Just Grounds to except against. But it cannot



be expected that our Religion should be all Mathematical Demonstration ; we our own selves are obliged to *Work out our Salvation with fear and trembling*, and must not think that God ought to make us go to Heaven by the same Laws of Necessity as the Sparks fly upwards. For where would be the Vertue of Believers when a Man could not help it ? There is a great deal of True Piety shewn in Believing & Relying upon God's Promises, in searching and comparing the Scriptures, and in a diligent Study and Application to understand God's Will ; but one is never the better Man for assenting to a Proposition in *Euclid*.

But this is not all. It is highly agreeable to the *Wisdom of God* in Governing the World, that these Prophecies should have such a Degree of obscurity in them, that they should not before-hand be understood in all their particulars : Because that would be an obstruction to many of the other great Designs of God's Providence, and put Him upon unusual Methods to bring them about, either by suspending the Freedom of Man's Will, or violently over-turning the Power of Nature to effect them. Suppose that God had particularly Predicted, that upon the 25<sup>th</sup>. day of *December*, in such a Year of *Augustus* his Empire, at the Town of  
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*Beth-lehem*, Christ should be Born ; and then see what would Naturally happen upon it. The Jews would have come all in Crowds to have Welcomed this *Heavenly Infant* into the World, every one would be Officious to pay their Respects, and offer Presents to Him, they would have carried Him about continually in Triumphant Chariots, and *Hosanna'd* Him from His coming into the World to his going out. But then there would be one great Thing omitted, which our Saviour came into the World to teach, that is, *Humility* ; which He could not have effectually recommended to Mankind, but only by living under such a state of *Poverty*. Or supposing *Judas* his name had stood in Capital Letters in several places of the *Old Testament*, and all his Traitorous Dissimulation so perfectly described, that *Judas* himself might have seen his own black Picture there ; and what now would be the Event of this ? *Judas* would have been so shy of the Temptation, that it would not have been in the power of the Jews, or the Devil either, to have made him embrace it, and 30 pieces of Silver would have been so far from enticing him to that Infidelity, that as many Talents of Gold would not have done it. So that God Almighty must have been forced to have over-powered His Will,

Will, or have altered the method of His Designs, to fulfill such an exact Prediction. Therefore I conclude, That it shews the great Wisdom of God in composing these Prophecies as they are, to shew before-hand, plain enough, the general Designs of His Providence, and to leave the particulars of them to be manifest only after the Event; by This Prudently contriving that, till the coming of Christ, God's People might have a sufficient Hope and comfortable Expectation of Him, and that the Rules of Nature, and the Divine Justice, might not be Unhinged neither by His coming.

*Of the Lives and Actions of Christ and the Apostles, as they are Recorded in Scripture.*

*Phil.* You must excuse me, *Credentius*, if what I am now about to urge be Ungrateful to you, when I take to pieces the Lives and Actions of these *Persons*, you have the greatest Veneration for; and shew *them* to have been Men of that Complexion, as very little to Deserve that High Esteem, you are wont to pay to *their* Characters. I will promise you, for Civility sake, not to make such Sport with these  
*Persons.*

*Persons* before you, as we, of our persuasion, do among our selves; but I have some Things to urge upon this Head, which, spoken never so tenderly, will shock the firmest Foundation of your *Christian Faith*.

To begin with *Jesus Christ*, the Author of your Sect. I cannot but smile when you Talk of His being Born of a *Virgin*, and I fancy a great many of you believe it too; but you at the same time don't believe a titlle of the Stories of *Æneas* his being Born of *Anchises* and *Venus*, of *Romulus* his being Born of *Mars* and *Rhea Sylvia*; but look upon these only as Specious Tales to cover over such shameful Amours which ought not to be owned. But where is the dif-

*Julian apud  
Cyrill. lib. 8.*

ference in these cases? For my part, I must needs acknowledge, I suspect something of the like matter in this Birth too. The Scripture it self owns, that *Joseph* himself was a little suspicious of some foul Play in this matter, when he determined to put his espoused Wife away privately, *Mat. 1. 9.*

But a Man of Sense\*, who has examined these matters long ago, has pretty well confirmed my suspicion; for he has sifted out the very name of a Souldier, called *Pan-*

*\* Celsus in Ori-  
gene lib. 1.*

*thera,*

*thera*, and tells a very broad Story of Him, and you know who.

*Cred.* Good God! That ever our Blessed Saviour should bestow such an Inestimable Benefit upon Mankind, as to be *Born*, and to *Die* for their Sins; and that there should be any found among them,

*The Birth of  
Christ vindicated.*

which should make such ungrateful Returns as to load Him with such abusive Blasphemy!

I find, *Philologus*, you are very hard to believe any thing in Scripture History; and yet every Malicious Lie, though never so simple, out of *Julian* or *Celsus*, goes down pleasantly with you.

You think you are wondrous Happy in your Comparison between the Birth of Christ and that of some of the Old Heroes; but there is a very wide Difference in all the Circumstances of these, if what you say as to the Birth of those Persons be true. But it is not to be allowed you, that all those Famous Men in early Times, who attributed their Original to a Deity, were of a Spurious Birth. For the reason why they claimed such a Parentage was, not to hide the shame of their Mother, (as you would have it) but to give themselves a greater *Character* to their Subjects or Enemies, and to make People fall in more readily with their Ambitious Designs,

Designs, as in the Expeditions of *Bacchus* and *Hercules*; and after them other Princes, who had a mind to make an extraordinary Figure among their Neighbours, pretended to the like Divine Birth, though their Mothers were never so Chast; as is evident in the History of *Alexander* the Great. But what signifie these Old idle Poetical Stories to a plain matter of Fact in a Learned and Knowing Age of the World? The Stories of *Hercules* and *Bacchus*, *Æneas*, &c. are all assigned to dark Ages, very little of the History of which is known, and those things in the Mythological Account of those times, which we suppose to be true, may, for ought we know, be only the Figments of Poetical Brains; and the Poets might Coin those celebrated Amours of the gods, only as fine Stories to entertain their Readers, without any Foundation at all in History for it. But the History of Christ's Birth is laid in a time when things might be better examined, and such sham Stories could not be made to pass upon the World. The Reigns of *Cecrops* or *Agamemnon* were proper times to Deify Strumpets, and to take any Father out of Heaven, which a Man pleased; but no body could be so silly to go about to practise these Tricks under the Empire of *Augustus*. Besides, it was  
not



not a fashion among the Jews to pretend to this Cœlestial Pedigree; all this simple Usage was owing to the Pothytheism or Idolatry of the *Gentiles*, and their gross Notions of the Divine Nature. Any one might very well pretend to be Son to a God, when 'twas generally thought that Gods got Children like Men: And a Man might reasonably suppose he might cover the Infamy of an illegitimate Birth by Fathering himself upon a god, when the very *Theology* of their Religion informed Men how frequently their gods lay with their Worshippers Wives. But the Jews had such Just and Rational Ideas of God Almighty, and so true Notions of His Goodness and Purity, that it could enter into no ones head, that was educated in their Principles, to borrow the Name of God-Almighty to be an Umbrage to such Wickedness; and such a Pretence would be abhorred and abominated by all that Nation, when they heard of it. The reason why these Ancient Heroes arrogated to themselves a Divine Original was, to gain a Remarkable Honour and Glory to themselves, which was the Idol of their Affections; but our Blessed Saviour despised all those things, He forbid Men to say or do any thing which might redound to His Fame, and made His whole Life a most wonderful

wonderful Example of Mortification and Humility. Therefore this Odious Comparison of Christ with these proud aspiring Heathens, is altogether as impertinent as it is malicious.

As for that Diabolical Story of *Panthera*, which *Celsus* tells, it is only a jumble of some Truth, with a great deal of malicious Falsehood, which was heretofore

*The Blasphemy of Celsus and Julian confuted.*

the usual Heathen way of contriving their Calumnies against the Christians. They had a Story of the Asses Head in *Tacitus*, or had heard something of our Saviour's riding upon an Ass, and this gave occasion for them to Coin their Scandalous Story of the Christians worshipping the Image of Christ, with an Asses Head and Feet, under the name of *Ononchites*. They had some imperfect Notion of the Mystical Eating of Christ's Body and Blood in the Sacrament, upon which they forged that wicked Calumny of the *Thyesteæ Dapes*, and their eating young Children at their Meeting. And so they having got in their Heads something of the name of *Panther*, or *Panthera*, This gave occasion to this Blasphemy likewise. It is most manifest from Ancient Writers that *Panther* was a Sir-name in the Family of Jesus

sus Christ. *Epiphanius* says expressly, *That Joseph was the Son of Jacob, Sir-named Panther; and that both Father and Son were called Panther.* And *Damascen*, treating of the Genealogy of Christ, speaks thus: *From the Line of Nathan the Son of David, Levi begat Melchi and Panther, and Panther begat him who was Sir-named Bar-Panther, and Bar-Panther begat Joachim, who begat the Holy Mother of God.* Whence these two

*Damasc. de Fid. Oribod. lib. 4. cap. 15.*

Authors had these Genealogies cannot be ascertained, but 'tis probably they had them from the Books of the Jews. For They oftentimes very seriously, and without any Reflection, call our Saviour *Ben-Panther*, meaning no more than the Son of *Joseph* by it.

For there is a Story in the *Talmud* of *Jerusalem*, of a Son of *Rabbi Jose*, who being Poisoned, was Cured by the name of *Jesus Ben-Pantheira*.

And there is a like Story in the *Midrash* upon the Book *Ecclesiastes* of one *Damah*, the Son of *Rab. Eleazar*, who being bit with a Serpent; his Father would not let him be Cured by one *Jacob* a Christian, by the name of *Jesus Ben-Pantheira*. And the *Sanedrin*

*Raim. Pug. Fid. p. 289.*

*nedrin*, a *Talmudical* Book, allows, that *Pandera* was the Husband of *Mary*. From all which it is very plain, that *Panther* or *Pandera* was the Sir-name of *Joseph*, as it had been before of several of his Predecessors. Now the *Heathens* finding that the supposed Father of Christ, in Scripture, was called *Joseph*, and they finding in the *Jewish* Books, or Discourses, another Name of *Pandera*, who was said to be Christ's Father too: they were willing presently to take up with the most malicious Reconciliation of this Difference, and so make *Joseph* the supposed Father, and one *Pandeira* the True, though Adulterous one. And now you see that this Blasphemous Reflexion, which you Infidels glory so much in, has no other ground but Malice and Blunder. Besides, it is a very silly Imputation, which no one, that considers things, can believe. How can any one think that *Joseph* could be imposed upon in a Matter of that Nature? He had apprehension enough, 'tis plain, to resent it at first, and, unless he had been very well satisfied of the Truth of that Child's Original, he would never have put the Business up at last. Adultery, after Matrimonial Contract, was no less than Death by the *Jewish* Law, and therefore how can we suppose, that *Joseph* should not only suffer

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her to live after having committed such a Crime, but that he should take to Wife such an Impure Creature. This is impossible to be thought by any one, who understands what an abhorrence the *Jews* had to this Crime. If this Malicious Reflection was true, how came the Mother of Christ to live in any tolerable Reputation amongst her Kindred? Or how was it safe for such a Delinquent to Converse, as she did, among the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, and other Zealous Persons for the *Jewish* Law? If Jesus Christ had came of such an Impure Birth, he would never have been suffered to have entered the Temple, whereas he frequently Prayed and Taught there; it being contrary to the *Mosaic* Law for such an one to come into the Congregation, *Deut.* 23. 2. If there had been any ground for this Imputation, he had by his Preaching down the Doctrines of the *Pharisees*, provoked Enemies enough to have upbraided him with it, and if they had suspected any thing of this kind, they would never have spared him. Indeed they Object to him the Meaness of his Extract, and call him *Joseph the Carpenter's Son*, but they would have made use of a harder Reflection if there had been any pretence for your Suggestion. Therefore I request of you, *Philologus*, no more to make use of this Ob-

Objection ; which you see carries so much Wickedness and Silliness with it.

*Phil.* But by your leave, Good Sir, for my life, I cannot see any thing in the Actions of that Person you bear this great Esteem for, that is any ways considerable ; but only by the prejudice of Education, you see every thing as thro' a Magnifying-glass ; and when you have given the Passages of his Life an imaginary Greatness, you then stand staring and admiring at the Idol of your own Brain. The most which he did was Curing a few Lame and Blind Folks, and so does many a Mountebank now adays, without being Deified for it. Alas-a-Day ! We have had in the World many more considerable Men, which People never made such a bustle with. What Comparison is there between the great *Romulus*, or *Numa*, and him ? The one laid the Foundation of the Greatest Monarchy in the World, by the force of his Arms ; and the other established it, by the best and wisest Laws. These were Great and Noble Geni-  
us's, and their brave Actions worthy to be admired by all Futurity. But what Worthy of Admiration can you see in one who was remarkable for nothing but Curing of

*Julian apud  
Cyrill. ed.  
Spanh. p.  
191.*



some few Sick People, and Preaching about to the Rabble a little plain Morality.

*Christ more Glorious and Great than Romulus, &c.*

*Cred.* This Argument is grounded, *Philologus*, upon so weak a Bottom, that it is not answerable to your Character, and your usual Vein of Reasoning to make use of it. For this carries with it all the *Jewish* Fondness in their expectation of a Temporal Messias, who must needs have him to be some fine Gearish Thing to come into the World, only to make a Blaze in it. You despise our Saviour because he appeared in mean Circumstances, and did not make so great a Figure as *Romulus* or *Numa*. What an Argument is here! And how are Wise Men often imposed upon by false Notions of Worldly Greatness! Pray, Sir, consider, That God Almighty sent our Saviour into the World to do Good, and not to please Peoples Fancies. The station in which he appear'd, was altogether as Glorious in God's sight, as that of the most Pompous Monarch; for God Almighty values no more the Robes and Diadems, the Noble Attendants and Numerous Guards of the greatest Emperor, than he does the feathered Caps of the Poor Mad-Folks in *Bedlam*. We Men are apt to set a great Value upon these things, because they agree with our *Carnal Affections*, and are the Finest Things  
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Part III. *with a Thief.* 133

this World affords; but to an All-wise and All-happy God they are all Mock-shew and Pageantry: And so they shall be to us in another World. Nothing is Glorious in God's sight but *Piety* and *Goodness*; and our Blessed Saviour's *Spotless Integrity* looked a Thousand times more Splendid to His Eyes, than all the Mad Ravages and Costly Triumphs of Conquering Princes, or the Craft and Designs of Politick ones. But consider, What a deal of Mischief has been done in the World by these Glorious Princes, these Men of Figure, you so much admire, How many Thousands have they Murthered by their Cruelty or Ambitious Designs? How many Noble Cities have been laid Waste, and whole Countries destroyed by them? Such a Glory, as this, is in reality, the greatest Infamy. But if there be any Glory in the World arising from Brave and Generous Actions, it is all centred in our Blessed Saviour. If it be any Glory to refuse proffered Honours, and to slight Fame for the meanest Obscurity; if it be any Glory to live a Life of the exactest Purity without any blemish in it, and hardly ever to spend a Day without doing some extraordinary Charitable Act to one or other; if it be any Glory to be the most Universal Friend that Mankind ever had, to

rescue their Souls from Eternal Death, and to Teach them the Wisest and Noblest *Institution* that ever was, and to entail on them, for their Conformity to it, *Everlasting Happiness*; then the Character of Jesus Christ is the most Glorious One that ever was; and all the Glory of great Monarchs, which you so much admire, will be but like the shining of Pebbles to the Stars, or the Dusky blaze of Comets to the *Meridian* Sun. But you, forsooth, think it an undervaluing of himself, that Christ should Cure Poor Sick People; but it would have been more Inglorious to him to have Cured chiefly the Rich. It was not the Principal Design of Christ's coming into the World to Cure Diseases, but to Preach the Gospel; he made use of this Miraculous Power only as a Means to prove his Divine Mission. But then in His Divine Wisdom he took care to make use chiefly of those Miracles which were apt to do most good. He might have contrived an Hundred ways of Acting Miracles beyond the power of Nature, besides the Curing the Blind and the Lame by a Word, which might as well have given Credit to his Doctrine; but then they would not have been so Beneficial to Mankind; but our Saviour contrived these to do good both to their Souls and their Bodies too, to con-

Confirm the *Religion* he taught, and also to Cure their Diseases. Nay, He Wisely bestow'd these Bodily Cures upon those chiefly to whom it was the greatest Charity to do it; the Rich might have been eas'd oftentimes of their Maladies, by the Physicians, and the Rules of Art; but the Poor must have Languish'd under their Distempers, if our Blessed Saviour had not Miraculously Relieved them.

Therefore, I say, the Character of our Blessed Saviour is much more Admirable by his Conversing and doing so much Good among the Poor, than if he had been never so Great, and done never so much Good in the Court of *Herod*. And as for that plain *Morality*, which you despise him for Preaching; even that plain *Morality* did exceed all the Studied *Philosophy* of the *Gentile* World.

*Phil.* Jesus Christ is by you generally allow'd to be the greatest Pattern of Vertue that ever was, which is a Thing I could never bring my thoughts about to assent to. His Religion would pretend to Teach Men to Mortifie all Affections, and therefore he should have been the most Eminent Example of this himself. But we find he oftentimes could not govern his passion; he seems frequently to be outrageously Angry

with the *Pharisees*, calling them many hard Names, *Hypocrites*, and *Generation of Vipers*, &c. and liberally deals about his *Vae vobis's* and *Maledictions* among them, which is the perfect Character of an Angry Man, (as *Celsus* says in this matter) who when he cannot Convince will Threaten: A Character not only unbecoming a God, but unworthy of a Prudent Man.

*Cred.* You have not been sufficiently Observing of the Life of our Blessed Saviour, when you Tax Him as an Angry Person, who was the most Patient One in the World. It must not be said that our Saviour never had upon him the Passion of Anger; but this Passion was never Criminal either for the Cause or for the Degree of it. And I doubt not but that it was the Design of Christ to suffer himself to be seen in some degree of that Passion, to evince the Lawfulness of it upon some Accounts, and by his Example to confute the Doctrines of those *Heathen Stoicks*, who would Condemn the Use of all Passions, and so make all those Natural Tendencies, God had implanted in our Souls, altogether superfluous. But our Blessed Saviour's Doctrine is contrary to these Paradoxical

*Celsus* apud O-  
rig. Ed. Can-  
tab. p. 107.

*Vindication of  
Christ's An-  
ger. Christ a  
Pattern of  
the Greatest  
Patience.*

doxical Notions, and forbids Anger only when there is no just Cause for it, *Whosoever is Angry with his Brother without a Cause, &c.* And his Life was exactly answerable to this Doctrine. He was Angry 'tis true with the Buyers and Sellers in the Temple; and there was just Reason for it, to see God's House so Irreligiously Abused. He shew'd a Resentment to the *Pharisees*, and upon very good grounds; because they, by their *Traditions* had made void the Moral Law of God; they excused Men from doing that which God had commanded, and laid upon them other unnecessary Burdens, which God had said nothing of. Besides, the Pride and Arrogance of this Sect, and their Contempt and Hatred of all that Contradicted them, made it necessary not to make use only of mild Ratiocination to confute them, for they scorned all Reason in respect of their *Tradition*, but to use some smartness in Reprehension to make them sensible of their Errors. These were such Just and Generous Causes of this Passion, as improved it into an extraordinary Vertue; but we never find in the Life of Christ, that he was peevishly Angry upon small Occasions; and upon the greatest, he still kept his Passion within the bounds of his Reason, for he always Argues as well under those



those Emotions of his Soul as he did at other times. No one could Reason better upon that Subject than our Saviour, when he drove the Money-Changers out of the Temple, *My House shall be called a House of Prayer, but you have made it a Den of Thieves.* But when there was no Cause for some Degree of Anger, and where the Honour of God was not immediately concern'd; the Life of our Saviour was the most Perfect Pattern of Patience in the World. He answers very mildly to all those Captious Questions, which his Adversaries brought to him to ensnare him; when they said he did his Miracles by the Power of the Devil, he very calmly demonstrates, that his Doctrine is contrary to the Devils Kingdom; when they persecuted him he prayed for them, and was willing to the utmost, to extenuate their Enormous Guilt, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* These are not the Characters of an Angry Person, but of a Soul perfectly Subjected to Reason and the Will of God.

But I have further to urge in this matter, that some of our Saviour's Expressions have not that keenness in them, which at first sight they seem to carry, and that there was more reason for his using them than there can be for ours. He calls them *Generation of Vipers,*

pers, which looks now like a very hard Word, but it was much mollified by common use among the Jews, who meant no more by it than *ill Men* or the *Seed of the Serpent*, Gen. 3. in opposition to Good-Men or the *Children of God*. And when he calls them *Hypocrites*: That is a name we ought to be very cautious in giving to any one, because we cannot positively tell whether they be so or no. But our Blessed Saviour could see into all their Clancular thoughts, and behold that little inward Reverence they bore to God Almighty, though their outward Actions pretended to so much of it; and therefore he having the exactest grounds for the Truth of what he said, he could not apply that name wrongfully to them, nor could that be accounted a passionate Word dropt from him at Random, which he was sure he had the justest Reason to call them by. But it is a shameful Calumny to say, that our Saviour made use of Passion for want of Reason in his Discourses, which are full of the most Exalted Reason in the World. Indeed he does not always make use of it to the Obstinate and Captious *Pharisees*, because he knew it would be to no purpose, but frequently sends them away with some severe Rebuke; but whenever he had any Auditors of a do-  
cible

cible Temper, as for Instance in his Sermon upon the Mount, he then Teaches Morality upon such excellent Grounds, as the exactest of the Heathen Philosophy falls short of.

*Phil.* Pray, Sir, excuse me if I think there is nothing so excellent in the Sermons of Jesus Christ as you Christians imagine. For

I take them, for the most part to be poor Vulgar Stuff, which any ordinary Man may

*Celsus apud Orig.  
Ed. Cant. p. 337.  
id. p. 282.*

say, and *Socrates* and *Plato* have said much better. They are only a few mean *Parables* of a *Sower of Seed*, of a *Labourer in a Vineyard*, or a *Wedding Feast*, which when the Moral is made out after the most Fanciful Way, is but Poor Dull Morality at the best, and nothing comparable to those Noble Ratiocinations among the *Ethnick Philosophers*. And in the Sermon upon the Mount, which is the best Performance, there is no rational Account given of those Moral Duties, but he would have all those Rules taken upon his Word; for he gives not a Tittle of Proof of

*Julian apud Cy-  
ril. Ed. Spanh.  
p. 206.*

those Moral Obligations, but instead of that, he puts us off with an *I say unto you*. And then how can you expect any sensible Man should be taken with such Lectures, and which

which were fit only for the poor silly Rabble, which he chose to have his Followers.

*Cred.* Those Parables, which you so much despise, were the most Ancient and most useful way of conveying Knowledge to the minds of Men, and they often stick with them when the Impressions made by other Rational Discourses are obliterated and forgot. Hence *Phædrus* says of the *Æsopick* Fables.

*Christ's speaking in Parables vindicated.*

—*Diligenter intucere has nœnias,  
Quantam sub illis utilitatem reperiēs.*

Mark well these Tales, for though they  
(idle seem,  
The Greatest Profit may be had from  
(them.

And he further shews how *Æsop*, in his Condition, was best able to Teach Men their Duties this way.

——*Servitus obnoxia,  
Quia quod volebat non audebat dicere;  
Affectus proprios in fabellas transtulit;  
Calumniamq; fœlis elusit Jocus.*

——Poor

—Poor Slave ! He durst not plainly  
 The Noble Truths which in his Bo-  
 The good Advice in merry Tales he  
 And *Calumny* avoided by the *Jest*.

And History gives us an Account, that sometimes these Fables have had greater force to persuade, than the most strenuous Argumentation of another kind. By one of these *Menenius* persuaded the Commonalty of *Rome*, which was all in an uproar, to be reconciled to the Senate ; and by another of the like kind, *Demosthenes* escaped, being delivered up to *Alexander*. But the Jews, above all Nations, delighted in this way of Reasoning, as *St. Hierom*, who lived long in *Palestine*, informs us in his Comment on *Math. 14*. And the Jewish Books at this day are full of such Parables as our Saviour uses.

And they are oftentimes ushered in with the same Phrase and way of Speaking, our Saviour does His ; *Wherunto*  
*shall*

*shall I liken such a Thing ? says Christ.*

*Vid. Dr. Lightfoot's Harm. of the New Testament. p. 30.*

The Jewish Books say, *A Parable : To what is the thing like ? To a Man, to a King of Flesh and Blood.* Nay, in the *Talmudical* Treatises there are Parables to be found, almost the very same with these of our Saviour. In the Treatise *Killaim*, there is a Dispute of *Sowing upon the Rocks and Stones*, and of mixing *Wheat and Tares together*. And in *Peah*, a Tract in the *Talmud of Jerusalem*, they speak of a *Tree of Mustard-seed*, which one might climb up into like other Trees. Now when this Parabolical way of Teaching Morality was the most celebrated Method among the Jews, you ought not to blame our Saviour, who always industriously avoided Singularity, for his falling in with their common Practice.

But supposing Christ, as you would have had him, should have taught Morality in the way of the *Heathen Philosophers* ; the Jews would have despised his Sermons then more than you despise them now.

The *Eastern* way of Reasoning was so different from that of the *West*, that the soundest Philosophy of *Greece or Rome* would be meer Jargon and Cant, if it was

*Our Saviours Discourses agreeable to the Eastern way of Reasoning.*

pro-



proposed, in the Philosophick way, at *Jerusalem*. The only Method of Reasoning, which agreed with their Palats, was to usher in an handsome Simile or Story apposite to the matter discoursed of, to apply a smart Saying of some Ancient Worthy, or to bring good *Proofs* from their Law or Antient Tradition; but to go to prove Morality to them, as *Plato* and *Tully* do, from the Eternal Rules of Justice, from the Rectitude and Honourableness of Vertue, and the Pravity and Turpitude of Vice, this would be meer *Heathen Greek* to the Jews, and such a way of Talking, which the Wise Men of their Education would have vilely despised. Indeed, the *Greeks* and *Romans* were forced to Argue after that manner, because they wanted Revelation to Instruct them in Morality; and they had no other way to come to the knowledge of particular Moral Obligations, but only to deduce them from General and Uncontroverted Principles; but the Jews must condemn this round-about way, as having a shorter Method to come to the Knowledge of their Duty, only by having Recourse to the Infallible Word of God. Their *Proof* was, not that *Socrates* or *Plato* had said this, or Reason does dictate it; but because God had commanded it.

Therefore

Therefore our All-wise Redeemer, who knew the Temper and Education of the People He conversed with, and whom He Preached to, took care that his way of Instructing them should be that, which was more agreeable to their Inclinations, and which might tend more to their Edification, than if he had brought among them a Philosophick Method of Morality, which was in use only amongst the Idolatrous Heathen. I warrant some of you Polite Gentlemen would have had our Saviour talk'd always some such spruce Speeches as you find in *Isocrates* or *Libanius*, but our Blessed Lord understood his Office better than so; for That would have but exposed him to the Mockery of his Auditors, and such an unusual Rhetorick would have been as Ridiculous at *Jerusalem*, as a School Boy's Declamation would be at one of our *English* Bars.

Besides, if the Men of Learning and Education could have understood such set and rational Discourses, as you would have had our Saviour speak; yet the ordinary People, whom our Saviour was to do most Good among, they must only have come to have gaped at his Lectures, without understand-

*By making use of the Greek, Philosophy and Eloquence he would not have been understood by People.*

ing a tittle of them. Possibly some such Men as *Philo* or *Josephus*, Men of an *Alexandrian* Education, who had conversed among the Heathen Philosophers, might have understood such a Vein of Arguing as you contend for ; but the poor ordinary Jews and Men, who only had an Education in *Judea*, could never have understood him. In short, that, which our Saviour took up with, was the Country and the Popular Eloquence, and which he must expect to do most good by ; and therefore, upon very good grounds, he chose to make use of this, rather than to please the itching Ears of a few Men, who could relish nothing but the Eloquence of *Greek* and *Latin* Books.

And there is another very good Reason, why our Saviour did not give a Rationale of all the Moral Duties he

*Avoided by this Proximity.*  
Preached, because That would have run them out into too great a Length, would have burthened the Memory of his *Auditors*, and would have hindred them from being so Comprehensive, and such Compendiums of Divinity as they now are. To have given a Rationale of but One or Two Heads of some of his Discourses ; to have shewn all the particular Excellencies, viz. Of a Peaceable Disposition, the Inward Quiet and Satisfaction,

*faction*, and the *Outward Love and Esteem*, the *Blessed Fruits* of it in *Families and Societies*, in *Church and State, &c.* To have gone through all the other *Duties*, after this Rule, would have made the Sermon upon the Mount bigger than *Aquinas* his Summs; and so our *Saviour* must have been a great deal longer a Preaching than he lived.

But Lastly, there was no need, that our *Saviour* should make use of such Rational Harangues, as others do. *He taught as one having Authority, and not as the Scribes.* He himself had Authority to command what was to be done, and not only to prove it. Others, *Doctors* among the *Jews*, were to prove a Thing to be a Duty, because it was *commanded in God's Word*, or delivered heretofore by the inspired Prophets; but our *Saviour* was inspired himself, and his Miracles proved what he said to be the *Word of GOD*, better than any Arguments or Glosses upon Scripture.

*Phil.* I have something to urge against one of your Arguments, which asserts, That *Christ's* way of Speaking by Parables, and such *Jewish* ways of Reasoning, was best understood by the People; when 'tis plain they were not: For *Matth. 13.* *Christ* is said purposely to speak in Parables, that the *Jews* might not understand him. Which by the

way is a very odd Way of giving *Laws* or *Obligatory Rules* in such dark Terms, as no body can tell what they mean.

*Cred.* All the Parables of our *Saviour*, (as particularly *those* which gave a *Representation of Moral Duties*, such as that of *Dives* and *Lazarus*, and of the *Wise and Foolish Virgins*, &c.) are not Difficult to

*Christ does not speak Parables in his Legislations; nor generally difficult.* be understood; and when he speaks as a *Legislator*, as in the *Sermon on the Mount*, he lays down his Rules in plain and direct Terms.

But when he speaks of some of the *Mysteries of Christianity*, of the *Rejection of the Jews*, and the *Preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles*, or the like; he then only makes use of *Obscure Similes*, which some of the *Captious Jews*, who followed *Christ* out of no good Design, might not understand. And herein he did no otherways, than what *Jamblichus* says *Pythagoras* did, who said *Many things in a hidden and covert manner, which those, who came to learn of him with a pure mind might understand; but others though they heard him, could not perceive his meaning.* And so in the 13th. Cap. of *Saint Matthew*, there was a *Promiscuous Multitude*, which followed *Christ*, all of which did not come with a good Design to learn his *Doctrine*; and that made him at that time propose

pose it more obscurely ; but when those *Captious People* were gone off, he then explained himself more openly to his *Disciples*, and some other *good People* which were probably with them. Or it was sufficient if he did it only to his *Disciples*, who would make it sufficiently known after his *Death* ; and there were sufficient *Material Reasons*, that all the *Doctrins of Christianity* should not be revealed till afterwards, when the *World* might be in a better *Disposition* to Receive them.

*Phil.* There are several of Christ's Actions likewise, which do very much disgust me, as particularly the *Cavalcade* he made upon his *Asinego*, as one of our Friends \* has expressed it. To Ride upon such an odd sort of Beast at the Head of a *Mobb*, is an *Action* not becoming a Wise or Grave Man, more especially the *Messias* or *Son of God*. And does it not look like an *Intolerable Affectation of Popularity*, to suffer the Rabble to *Hosannah* him all along upon the *Road*, and to throw their *Doublets* in the way to grace the *Triumph* ? If you and I were to see the same thing done, by one whom we were not prejudiced by a previous Respect to, we could not but think it great *Vanity* or *Enthusiasm*.

Orac. of  
Reas. p.  
163.



*Cred.* There is a Complication of *Mistakes Philologus*, upon which you ground this Calumny against our *Blessed Lord*. For you think it an odd thing to ride upon an *Afs*,

*Christ's riding  
upon an Afs not  
Ridiculous.*

because Men don't usually do so in our *Western Countries*; and the *Eastern* People, in those Times, perhaps, would have laughed as much at our being such Chevaliers in the Time of Peace, and to Mount *Horses* upon all Occasions, which they did very rarely, but in order to Battle. It was no *Comical Thing* as you Wits would make it, to see a Man in those *Ages*, and in that *Country*, to Ride upon an *Afs*; for *Balaam*, who was a great *Courtier* to one of the King of those *Countries* Rode upon one, *Numb.* 22. 28.

*A Token of his  
Humility, and  
Nature of his  
Kingdom.*

Neither was it any *Affectation* of *Popularity* which moved our *Lord* to this Action, for that was a thing which he upon all Occasions avoided, forbidding the Miracles which he did to be divulged, and hiding himself from the People when they would have made him a King. But he was pleased to make use of this mean sort of Triumph as a kind of *Hieroglyphical Representation* of the *Humility* which his *Religion* taught, and which, by  
this,

this, he recommended to them. For this was the usual way of the *Oriental People* to represent things by, as *Micajah* his pushing with Horns, and *Ezekiel's* boiling the Pot. By this, he likewise represented the *Spiritual Nature of his Kingdom*, which was not of this *World*; for when the *Jews* expected their *Temporal Messias* should have Rode in all the *Triumphal Glories* of a *Roman Procession*, with a *Charriot* drawn by *Horses* of the *Noblest Breed*, and *Captive Princes* chained to it; He to shew them their great *Mistake* in this matter, made a *Triumph* of another kind, upon a common *Beast*, borrowed of an ordinary *Man*, and not *Plundered* from a *Dethroned King*; he did not trample like the *Roman Victors* upon *Scarlet* and *Gold*, but only upon the mean *Garments* of the *common people*; and chose the weak *Attendance* of his *poor unarmed Disciples* rather than the *Armed Guards* which surrounded the *Imperial Person*. He might if he pleased have commanded to himself these, and a *Thousand* times greater *Glories* but even when he suffered *Honours* to be paid him, he chose even at that *Time* to *Teach Humility*, and a *Contempt* of the *Glories* of this *World*.

To shew him to  
be a King as  
well as a Pro-  
phet, &c.

Besides, He permitted this Honour to be paid him, to demonstrate his *Kingly Office*, which it was necessary the People should be Taught; and he having now, by Preaching a considerable time, almost Perfected his *Prophetick Office*, by his submitting to this Triumph, *Providence* made way for his entering upon his *Sacerdotal*, or his being a *Sacrifice for the Sins of the World*. If Christ had suffered the people to have proclaimed him a King before, the *Jews* would have laid hold of him, and hindered his Preaching; and if he had not once submitted, though in the Humblest manner, to accept the *Honours* of that *Dignity*, they would not have known him to be a King as well as a *Prophet*, which the *Messias* was to be. And now his Preaching being finished, he acknowledged his Kingdom, not out of any Ambitious Design, (for what pleasure could so Wise a Person take in such poor Honours?) but to fulfill the Will of God, and the great Eternal Designs of *Providence*; and thereby to give an Occasion now at last to *Jews* to Murder him, that his *Innocent Life* might be offered up to God for a Sacrifice for our Sins. This, *Philologus*, is no matter of *Scoff* and *Ridicule*, but is a Train of the most *Wise* and *Adora-*  
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II. his de- ce, eo- he ble. ce, vi- his the he re, and not est ig- to he ng g- n, on ill e- an er ed is, le, a- le

Part III. *with a Theist.* 153

ble Providence, which some time or other you will Praise and Admire, or else will Eternally Grieve and Tremble at.

But if this was any Indecent Action of our Saviour, the Jews would be forwardest to Expose it. But they know very well that the same was Prophecied of the *Messias* by *Zachary* the Prophet, quoted by *Evangelist*. And the most Learned Jews, *R. Eliezer*, *Nachman*, *Jarchi*, *Aban-*

*Jews interpret this of the Messias.*

*banel*, &c. own that Prophecy to belong to the *Messias*, Behold!

*Vid. Bochar, An. Sacr. p. 113.*

*thy King cometh unto thee lowly, and riding upon an Ass*, &c. *Zach. 9. 4.* A Prophecy by which the Jews, as *Theoderet* says, were *ἐκπεσόντες* struck with Thunder, and therefore some of them were forced to desert the Ancient Interpretation of their Schools as to the *Messias*, and explain it of *Zerubbabel*, who was a poor Prince. But these are Modern Fetches out of despight to Christianity, & which some of the latter Jews are too generous to agree with. And therefore *Grotius* is not to be pardoned for taking part with *Aben Ezra*, who applies this to *Zerubbabel*, and gives our Saviour only the poor come-off of a Secondary Sense. The Comment of *Rabbi Solomon* looks much more Christian.

*It*

*It is impossible to Interpret this of any other than the Messiah, when we see it fulfilled in no other Person.*

*Phil.* To be yet plainer with you, I cannot think that those Miracles which he is said to have *done* were True, but only He, being cunninger than the rest of the *People*, made them believe strange Things were done by his power, which either were never done at all, or else would have been done without him. If a Sick Man

*Celsus apud  
Orig. Blunts  
Notes in Phi-  
lospb.*

was naturally in a hopeful way of *Recovery*, If Christ accidentally saw him, it was then given out that He Cured him. And if the Man had an Opinion of His *Miraculous Power* and *Holiness*, his Fancy might contribute a great deal towards it; and therefore we find that a *good strong Faith* is always requisite for the support of a Miracle; and the *Evangelist* himself owns, That Christ could do no Miracles in his own Country, *because of their Unbelief*, *Mat. 3. 58.* That is, they were acquainted with him from the beginning, and were not prejudiced with that extraordinary Opinion they had of Him, in other places, and so would not let those things pass upon them for Miracles which deceived others.

*Cred.*

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*Cred.* It is not to be expected, but that Men of your Principles should disbelieve the Truth of our *Saviour's Miracles*; for if you were satisfied upon this Point, you must necessarily own the Truth of His *Doctrines*; and therefore, I don't wonder that they lay out all their Wit and Malice to weaken the Belief of these. But to give you satisfaction that the Miracles of our *Saviour* were not such crafty Juggling Tricks as you pretend, I desire you would consider a few *Reasons* which I shall propose to you.

1. By the whole Character and Tenor of our *Saviour's* Life, He appears to be a very *Good Man*; and therefore could not be Guilty of an *Imposture*, which no body, but vile *Rogues* and *Cheats*, will be concerned in. Who can conceive so Good a Person as JESUS CHRIST, who, all along His whole Life, made it His Business to do *Good*, to inform Men of their Duty, and Teach them the exactest Rules of Virtue, who Executed His *Miraculous Power* not for Ostentation, and the Aggrandizing His Fame, but to do *Good* both to the *Souls* and *Bodies* of Men, who despised all proffered *Honours*, and manifested a perfect *Contempt of the World*, who was so Kind and Obliging, so Meek and Patient, in all His

*Christ no Imposture and therefore a Good Man.*

Con-



Conversation, who Prayed for and laid down His Life for His Enemies ; Who can believe that a Person of such *Wondrous Goodness* would make use of such Base Tricks as you Suggest ? This may be supposed of an Ambitious Man, or one of an ungodly Life, who had no regard to Vertue, or who would do any thing to gain a Popular Applause ; but can never be reasonably thought of so *Good and Innocent a Person* as our Blessed LORD. You cant suppose that He Counterfeited only this *Goodness* ; for some time or other such an Hypocritical Vizzor would have dropped off in his whole Course of Life ; for such Men cannot always stand upon their Guard, and some time or other in Conversation a Man must display what he really is, and he had so many Enemies, that some of them would be sure to have catch'd hold of it ; or if we can suppose Him to have been ever successfully Cautious, after he set up for his supposed *Imposture*, yet how can we imagine Him to have Acted such a Part for Thirty Years before His Preaching ? There is no ground for such a Suspicion, and the plain openness of His Conversation often with *Publicans and Sinners*, does demonstrate that He was not Acting the *Hypocrites* part, who would have industriously avoided such  
Ac-

Acquaintance to gain himself a better Reputation.

2. Men that set up for this Trade of *Imposture*, take care to have as few Witnesses as ever they can in what they do, for a multitude of Eyes will be apt to pry too nearly into their Tricks; and if the Cheat happens to succeed once or twice well, they are afraid of *repeating* it for fear of some unlucky miscarriage. But there is nothing like this in our *Saviour's* Miracles. He repeated them over and over as oft as there was Occasion for them; and Cured multitudes of *Blind* and *Lame* in the same place. The Miracles, which he frequently did, were so publickly to be discerned, in the face of so many Witnesses, that they were not like strange hear-say Stories, done I know not where, and before I know not whom, but before multitudes of Spectators, many of which bore him a great deal of Ill-Will. If he had any covert way of Curing these Diseased Persons by Natural means, he would have chose to have done it in private, but he only spake the Word in the face of the whole Multitude, and the distemper'd Persons became whole. And this the *Pharisees* oftentimes see him do, and durst not question the Truth of his Performances, they owned it to be performed by a super-natural

*Because  
his Miracles  
done so often  
and before so  
many.*

natural Power, but maliciously attributed them to a Diabolical one; and at another time when he Cured the Man of the Palsy, they could not deny but that He really did Cure him, finding Fault only for His doing it upon the *Sabbath-day*. He raised a Dead Man to Life in the open Streets, as he was carrying to his Funeral, with all the Attendants about him, so that if any Trick was plaid in this matter, there were Witnesses enough to discover it. He increased the Loaves and Fishes at one time for the Feeding Three Thousand, at another Five Thousand Men, and 'tis a strange Thing that none of all these should discover the *Imposture* if there was any. Nay, it is not to be imagined that any *Impostor* could be so simple to go to put such a Trick upon such an Army of People, and yet hope that none of them should find out the Cheat.

3. The Nature of *Christ's* Miracles were such that they could admit of no *Collusion*: Jugglers may play an abundance of strange Tricks, because they are Masters of an Artificial Slight of Hand, and use a great deal of cunning Gestations to keep Peoples Eyes from an exact sight of what they do, which if narrowly lookt into, would not at all be wonderful.

But

But our *Saviour's* Miracles can never be accounted for this way. No Juggler can make a Sick Man believe he is well; or a Blind Man fancy he sees ever afterward. It is possible, by some secret cunning, that Christ might make Five Loaves to appear to be Ten; but He could never by such an Art make Five Thousand People think they filled their Bellies with them. Legerdemain might put a Fallacy upon these Peoples eyes; but such Travelling Peoples Stomachs could never be cheated after this rate. What Trick could be plaid when the Woman that touched but the Hem of His Garment, had her Issue of Blood dried up? Or whas Juggling could there be, when He raised up *Lazarus* from the Dead, when the Corps stank, and the Spectators Noses, as well as their Eyes, were Witnesses of the *Miracle*.

4. He that could set up for a Counterfeiter of such *Miracles*, which would cost a *Man* so much Pains to Perform, and so much Danger if he found out, must needs expect some Temporal Advantage by it. No body could be so simple to forfeit his Honesty, his Fame, and his Neck for nothing. A *Man* would expect some Recompence or other for such an Hazardous Undertaking,

*No Cheat, because he could get nothing by it.*

Undertaking, and not Cheat for pure Cheating sake. But what Advantage did our *Saviour* make, or could he expect from that *Imposture* which you would suppose him to have carried on? As for *Fame*, and *Riches*, and *Honour*, which are the great Baits that set all your *Impostures* agog, it is plain he Despised and Undervalued all these things. There is no doubt to be made but that if his Eyes had been upon Gain, he might have drawn considerable Wealth from such a Number of People which every where followed him, or at least might have raised himself above that Poverty he chose to live in.

So many *Religious Men* and *Women*, and some of them of considerable Fortune, would have been very proper Subjects, for a *Man* of such Designs to have worked upon; but this was never Objected or Suspected of him, and he was so little Master of Riches, that he was forced to be at the Expence of a *Miracle*, to pay a small Tax. If *Fame* or *Honour* had been his Aim, he would have endeavoured to spread and propagate the Glory of his *Miraculous Works*; but he rather endeavoured, upon all Occasions, to Stifle them; and when the Multitude would have made him a King, he conveyed himself away from them. The other Mock-

*Meffias's*

*Messias's* were spurred on to their *Impostures* by the hopes of that Kingdom, which our *Saviour* refused; but it does not appear that our *Saviour* had any other Aim, but to do Good to Mens Souls; and when ever they Talked to Him of a *Temporal Kingdom*, He always told them *His Kingdom was not of this World*. If our *Saviour* had had any Spark of *Ambition* in Him, that favourable Opportunity would have Tried Him; for the *Jews*, at that time, were full of Expectation of a *Temporal Messias*, and He might have carried the whole Nation after Him, if He had but set up for a *Temporal Prince*. For that, which Disgusted the *Jews* most, and made many of His *Followers* leave Him, was His Crossing their *Notions* with a *Spiritual Kingdom*, which they had no Idea of. 'Tis plain, therefore, if our *Saviour* had designed any Secular Advantage to Himself, He would have Closed with their fond *Opinions*, to have gained an Interest among them; but contrariwise, he lost the Favour of many of their great Ones, by *Reproving them for their Faults*, and, at last, Slighted the *Kingdom* they would have conferred upon Him; and therefore, (I say) no *Honour* could be a Bait to Him to carry on an *Imposture*, who could so bravely Despise the Greatest of *Honours*. All that you can say, is, That He

M                      looked



looked upon it as the Greatest *Honour* to be the Ring-Leader of a Sect.

5. But then we must consider, *Because of the great Penalty on Impostors.* That though this has been the Inducement for several *Impostors* to

Deceive the People, yet it has been when they thought they were able to do it without any great hazard, especially of their Lives. Every one who lived in the Jewish *Common-Wealth*, must needs know what a Capital Punishment was to be inflicted upon *False Prophets* or *Impostors*, and therefore no one in his Senses would venture his Life for the sake of such a Cheat, where there was not an extraordinary Advantage attending. As for those that set up for *Temporal Messiaes*, the case is widely different: They gathered after them a Number of Men in a *Hostile* way, who could defend them from the Power of the Law; but those who Propagated a *False Religion*, in a Peaceable Method, were left naked to the *Sword of Justice*, and therefore they could no otherwise but expect to Sacrifice their Lives for their *Doctrine*: And, according to your Supposition, this must be our *Saviour's* case, and therefore, How can you suppose Him to be so simple, to expose His Life for the sake of a wild *Imposture*, and for the *Honour* of being a Ring-Leader to some few Giddy

*Followers*?

*Followers* ? Indeed, in those Places, where *Liberty of Opinion* is Tolerated, Men may venture upon such an Impudent Design; but *this* is not to be supposed in a Nation where the Laws were so severe upon *Innovators*.

Every one who Reads our *Saviour's* Sermons, must allow Him to be a Man of *common* Sense; but He must be a Man out of His Wits, to go about to carry on an *Imposture*, which he must be certain to be Executed for. Or, if He had any hopes to Evade the *Rigor* of the *Laws*, it must be by soothing the Men in *Authority*; but our *Saviour* did not in the least attempt this, but, by His daily *Reproofs*, Provoked the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who only were able to Support Him; and therefore you must make Him down-right Mad to manage an *Imposture* after that Rate.

6. If all these Miracles were Cheats and Delusions, tho' they had the good Luck to pass upon the People at first, yet some time or other the Fraud must be discovered; especially, since if they were Cheats, they must be managed by a Combination of several People. Suppose that 'twas agreed between *Lazarus* and *Christ*, that he should appear only to be Dead, and to be raised by

Such Numbers could not  
Conceal a  
Cheat.

Him again, That the Widows Son plaid the same Trick, That the Blind Men could see before, That the Lame Men pretended only to Halt, And that the *Five Thousand* Men gave only out a False Story, that they had their Bellics full out of such a small *Provision*, &c. Now if these Miracles were only pretended, and there being so many Men conscious to the Cheats, How should it come to pass that none of all those should ever Discover them? When a Number of Men are concerned in a Secrecy, even where the Cause is most Just, some Traytor or other betrays the Intreague; and therefore you cannot think there would be more Fidelity in such a vile *Imposture*, as you suppose this to be. Christ had one False *Disciple* among the Twelve; and therefore, to be sure, all those *Five Thousand* Men could never agree to be Vouchers for such a Lying Miracle. Or if they kept His Council in his more Prosperous Estate; yet when He fell into Trouble, if they had any Insincerity to accuse Him of, to be sure some or other would have been brought to His Trial to accuse Him; which would have been more material Evidence than any thing His Adversaries then Objected against Him. There is hardly one single *Imposture* advanced, but that something or other is started up in a little time,

time, which, by comparing of Circumstances together, discovers the Cheat; but for such a multitude of *Impostures*, (which our *Saviour* must upon your Account be Guilty of) carried on by a *Confederacy* of so many *People*, and in the space of so many Years never to be *discovered*, but for want of this, the Jews must be forced to take up with such *Poor Evidence* against our *Saviour*; and all the Infidels down from the *Apostolick* Age to this time, have never been able to make any such unfair Dealings appear. This is perfectly incredible, and more *Miraculous*, let me tell you, than any thing we say that he did.

7. But it is not a little unreasonable, *Philologus*, that you should question the Truth of our *Saviour's* Miracles, which have been owned for so many Ages, and which the greatest Enemies of the *Christian Religion* never could be so hardy to question? The *Unbelievers*, in the time of *Christ* and his *Apostles*, and in the next following *Generations*, were the best able to Examine into the Truth of these Matters, but they, after all the *Inquisition* their Wit or Malice could make, could not find but that our *Saviour* did these *Miraculous Works* which are attributed to him; & therefore they set themselves

*All Christ's  
Enemies and  
his Miracles.*

only to give an Account how he came to do them otherways, than by the *Power of God*, which they were unwilling to own he was assisted with. The Jews, who were *contemporary* with our *Saviour*, they attributed them to a *Diabolical Power*, saying, *He cast out Devils by Beelzebub the Prince of the Devils*. The Heathen Infidels, as *Hierocles*, *Celsus*, *Julian*, &c. do contend they were done by *Magick*, and the *Modern Jews* never pretend to disown the matters of Fact, but only say *these extraordinary things were done by a right pronounciation of the Skem Hamphoras*, or the inexpressible Name of *God*, which Christ having, by Cunning, got out of the Temple, this enabled him, (as they tell us) to do all the Miracles which he did. And besides, the *Modern Jews* are so far from disowning the *Miraculous Power* of Christ, that they have several *Stories* of it in their *Talmud*, as *Mahomet* himself in his *Alchoran* has the same. Therefore, methinks, it has a little too much the Air of Confidence, for the *Unbelievers* only of this Age, to deny his *Miraculous Power*, which has constantly been allow'd by the most inveterate Enemies of Christianity for so many *Hundred Years*; some of which lived so nigh the time, when these Matters were Transacted, were so sharp-sighted, and  
ow'd

ow'd such a Spight to Christianity, that they would have detected the Juggle, if there had been any, altogether as well as our Eagle-Eyed Wits now a-days.

8. As for your *Objection* of *Christ's not being able to do Miracles in his own Country*, that is grounded on a Mistake. For in that place it is not said, that *Christ* could not, or did not do any Miracles; but *He did not many Miracles because of their Unbelief.* And to use the Words of the Learned *Grotius* upon the place. *Christ did Miracles round the Country, that they who knew nothing of him, might believe in him. To those that begun to believe he added New Miracles, by which they might be confirmed in their New Faith. But to those who despised the first Miracles he repeated no more, lest the Liberality of God should grow cheap.* And indeed for such people that Slighted his Miracles, what reason had God to afford them more, to trample upon still? But your Argument, which makes an Antecedent Faith, or good Opinion of Christ, necessary for his working Miracles, has no foundation at all. For wherever Christ first worked Miracles, the People were Incredulous before they saw his

*Reason why  
Christ did do  
few Miracles  
in his own  
Country.*



*Works*, so that the first *Miracle* he wrought must carry its own Evidence with it, and be truly *Miraculous*; and then what reason is there to think, that he should work True *Miracles* to *Convert the Infidels*, and Sham ones to *Beguile the Believers*? If your Suggestion be true, that he was afraid of his *Impostures* being *discovered* where he was known; Why would he venture to do any *Miracles* at all? For the *History* allows, he did some, though not many; and *one* or *two* such false Tricks, plaid among a prejudiced *People*, would have endangered His Reputation as much as an Hundred.

*Phil.* But unless Christ had some foul Game to Play, What was the *Reason* that he pickt up such a number only of *Illiterate Stupid Auditors*, a parcel of poor *Celsus* apud *Fisbermen* and *disolute Publicans*, *Orig.* lib. 2. and a Wretched Tribe of *Mobb*, *Julian* apud *who were wont to run after him?* *Cyrl.* lib. 6. If he had designed to Teach *Morality* seriously, without any By-Ends, and had done Real *Miracles*, he would have had Men of a better Figure to have been his *Disciples*; which would have much contributed to the spreading of the Gospel, when it was confirmed by the *Testimony* of those, who had a better Judg-

ment

ment and Reputation, than those First Propagators of it. But why did he sort out such poor ignorant People, that instead of Sense were qualified only with Credulity, unless he had designed to make a Property of them? If he had designed really to instruct them, he would rationally have Taught them their Duty; but instead of this, as *Celsus* says, he *Bids them only Believe, and they shall be Saved*; he does not cry out on them, to consider the Reason of what he says, but only to believe him. Which is a way of proceeding which seems to carry much of the Juggle with it.

*Cred.* The Reason why so many poor and unlettered People were first called to Christianity, was not because their Simplicity might be more easily imposed upon, but because such had better Dispositions towards it. Our Saviour nor his Apostles did not refuse Disciples of any Rank whatsoever; nor were they absolutely destitute of Wise and Rich Men; for *Nicodemus*, *Joseph of Arimathea*, and *Sergius Paulus*, were Men of a considerable Figure; but their greatest Harvest was among the Poor and Unlearned, because they were better qualified for the Reception of the Gospel.

*Celsus* apud  
Orig. Ed.  
Cant. 282.  
Id. p. 303.

Poor better  
qualify'd to  
receive the  
Gospel than  
Rich.

For Rich Men were so elated by the Grandieur of their *Condition*, had such a Respect of *Persons*, and a Love for the *Honours* and *Gayeties* of this *World*, that they rarely could be perswaded to attend to the *Reasons*, which were offered by Persons of such a mean Character and Equipage as our *Saviour* and his *Apostles* were. They might have listen'd to a Word or two which was spoke by some great *Doctor* of the *Sanedrim*, but they would not vouchsafe to hear what was said by such poor *Itinerant Preachers*. Besides, the *Doctrine* which they Taught was all *Gall* and *Wormwood* to such Persons; That *Contempt* of the *World* which Christ's *Religion* did recommend, That extraordinary *Charity* to the *Poor*, That *Patience*, *Humility*, *Resignation* to *God's Will*, and *Forgiveness*, & *Loving* of *Enemies*, seem'd perfectly inconsistent with a Great *Fortune*. And therefore 'tis no great Wonder that but few of them were *Converts* to such unpalatable *Doctrines*.

The ignorant  
than the Learned.

And as for the Wise and Learned of that time, they were as much prejudiced against the *Religion* our *Saviour* Taught. The *Literate Jews*, who had been bred up under the great *Rabbins* of the *Sanedrim*, had their thoughts

thoughts so wholly bent upon the Ancient *Traditions* of the Church, and the Celebrated *Books* and *Sayings* of their Masters, that they looked down with Contempt upon this New *Doctrine*, Preached by Men of so mean Education as Jesus Christ and his Illiterate Followers; and thought no one could Teach any thing worth attending to, but who had come out of one of their *Rabbini-cal Schools*. The *Greeks* had their Heads full of *Pagan Philosophy*, and could relish nothing but what favoured of their *Fashionable Eloquence*, and so despised the *Propagaters of Christianity* as a parcel of Simple Prating *Enthusiastical Mechanicks*. And therefore it was very Natural that our Blessed Lord, or his Apostles, should make very few *Proselytes* of these sort of Men, when the Pride of their Learning, and their Opinion of their Vain *Philosophy* was so great a Bar, against the Reception of the plain *Doctrines of Christianity*.

But our *Saviour* had another *Reason*, besides the Natural Tendency of the Thing, why he chose to have his *Follow-ers* of the Poorer & Illiterate sort of Men, *viz.* To shew the *Miraculous Assistance* of God in the Propagating the Gospel, and the mighty Force of Christianity, to

*This Choice made the Progress of the Gospel more Miraculous.*

make

make its way through the greatest *Obstacles*. There would be one *Material Argument* lost for the Proof of the *Divinity* of the *Christian Religion*, if our *Saviour* had Taught it first to the greatest Clerks among the Jews or Greeks, or made his Disciples out of Men of great Families and Fortunes. It might then be Objected, that it was no wonder that this *Religion* throve so well in the World, when it was carried on by the united force of the *Eloquence* and *Reason* of such celebrated Schollars, and when it was furthered by Men of such Interest and Reputation. You Unbelievers then would have fell very hard upon us with this Argument, That Christianity was only a *Politick Contrivance*, and that it might be very well carried on with that Success it was, when it had all Human Advantages possible to assist it. And therefore our Blessed Lord in his Infinite Wisdom, must foresee the *Inconvenience* of this *Objection*; and upon that Account, chose his first Disciples to be illiterate Men, who, by the Assistance of *God's Holy Spirit*, should carry on a New Religion against all Human Probability, and bear down the Jewish Ceremonies and Heathen Idolatry, although supported by all the Arts and Diligence of the Learned *Rabbins* and *Philosophers*. And this is the Sum of the

Apostles

Apostles Argument. *Not many Wise nor many Noble are called: But God hath chosen the Foolish Things of the World to confound the Wise; and God hath chosen the Weak Things of the World to confound the Things which are Mighty. And Base Things of the World, and Things which are Despised hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not to bring to nought things that are: That no Flesh should Glory in his presence, 1 Cor. i. 16, &c.*

And so you Talk a little too fast, when you say, That our Saviour required nothing of his Disciples but only Faith, or to Believe. 'Tis true that he designed Faith to be the ground Work of his Religion, and therefore he endeavours to lay this Foundation first, that they should believe him to be the *Messias*. For when they believed, That the Doctrines of his Religion would be more easily instilled into them; because then they would carry Authority with them, and he would not be put upon all Occasions to prove what he Taught by Scripture or Reason. But we do not find that our Saviour meant, that Men should only take up with Faith, and nothing more; for if he did, Why should he have put himself to the trouble of Preaching his most Excellent Sermon upon the Mount, where

Practical

*Why Christ required Faith in his Disciples.*



Practical Rules of Morality were laid down with the greatest Exactness that ever was in the World. But I must freely own, that Men had greater Thoughts of *Faith* in the *Apostolick* Times, than they have in these cold Ages of Christianity. Faith then was not thought only a bare Assent to the Truth of Christ's Doctrine, and his being the *Messias*, but such an inward Principle or Effect of God's Grace in their hearts, as gave them not only Conviction of, but a Zeal for their Duty, inspired them with such flaming Affections and Love of God, and such a longing for Heaven, as even to wish for Martyrdom to get thither the sooner. And let some Men laugh as much as they please at inspired and infused Habits ; it if a Good Man does attentively read God's Word, devoutly Meditate upon our Saviour's Life and Actions, and accustom himself to frequent and earnest Prayers ; he will quickly find his Thoughts animated with that Noble Sense of Religion, with such a steadfast Belief of, and such a hearty Love for our Saviour's Doctrines, as will give him such a Relish of True Christian Faith, as is never to be had from the flat *Rationales* of a Hundred Remonstrant Systems.

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Part III. *with a Theist.*

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But when you insinuate that our Saviour made Choice of such mean Auditors, the better to make his pretended Miracles pass upon them; I will only ask you, Dont you think these ordinary People had their common Senses as well as other Men? Could they not tell Wine from Water, a Blind Man from a Seeing one, and a Dead Man from a Live one? And if they could do this, they might as well judge of our Saviour's Miracles, as any *Philosopher* or *Virtuoso* in the World.

*Mean Men as  
good Judges  
of Miracles  
as others.*

*Phil.* There is another thing in the History of Christ, which I cannot digest; which is, that you cry him up as the greatest Example of Patience, and yet he does not seem to bear his Sufferings and Death with any tolerable Courage. But hear what *Celsus* says to you Christians: *If you would Deify a Man for Bravery at his Death, you have the Example before you of Hercules, Æsculapius and Orpheus. But there are yet Braver than these. Anaxarchus, when he was thrown into a great Mortar, and most cruelly Pounded there, he despised the Torment, and said this Worthy Thing indeed of the Divine Spirit. Beat the Bellows of Anaxarchus, for you do not beat him. And this Anaxarchus was no more than*

a Natural Philosopher. What did Epictetus do? Why, when his Master was torturing his Leg, without concern he smiled in his Face, and said, You will break my Leg. And when he had broken it, he only said, Did not I tell you that you would break it? But what did your God say comparable to this? Nay I will add further, That his Praying that the Cup might pass from him, and his complaining of God's Desertion of him upon the Cross, seem to shew a Fear and Despondency unworthy of any Great Mind under Afflictions.

Cred. Any one who is acquainted with the Lives of the Philosophers, know it was a chief part of their Study to invent smart Sayings to be talkt of, which was the thing they principally aimed at; but then it is observable, that these Sages who said so many fine Things, seldom did any good ones. They did not set half the value upon a good Charitable Action, as they did upon an Apothegm; and Men of the most Vicious Lives have utter'd some of the finest Flowers of the Pagan Morality. 'Tis the Character of our Saviour and his true Followers, *Non magna loquimur, sed vivimus.* Not to talk great things, but to live them. And one good

Heathen Philosophers  
not more Patient or  
Couragious than Christ

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good Action of Christ and his Apostles, was worth an Hundred of such Sayings. If a Man had been to look into the Heart of one of these *Philosophers* when he was asserting one of these Sentences, he might have read there a great deal of Pride reflected upon himself for the Witty Thought, a great deal of impotent Malice against his Enemies, and a great deal of Fear and Impatience, tho a Predominant Pride made him carry off all with a Jest. But when *Celsus* says, *What did Christ say comparable to these?* *Origen* answers admirably well, *His Silence under the Whips and the Torments, shewed a greater Courage and Patience than the most Eloquent Greek could shew, by speaking in those circumstances.* To which we may add one thing more; but that which Eclipses all the Glory of the *Heathen Philosophy*, is, That our Saviour under his Sufferings Prays for his Enemies, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*, whilst the Sayings of these Suffering *Philosophers* carry in their Face an unregenerate Malice, and spiteful Reflection upon their Persecutors.

As to what you Object against our Saviour's Praying *That the bitter Cup might pass from him*; I cannot tell why you should im-

*Reason of our Saviour's praying That the Cup, &c.*

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pute

pute *that* to his want of Courage or Patience; He made no Passionate Exclamations, shew'd no Desponding Grief, or any other indecent Passion, under his Torments, but bore them all with as much Mildness and Patience as Human Nature is capable of. Suppose one of your *Heathen Philosophers* had been in our Saviour's place, and endured as much Pain in Mind and Body as He? He would perhaps have said that Pain was no Evil, and that his Mind was fixt upon such a firm Basis, that his Torments were insensible, though at the same time every Groan and Shrug would have given the Lie to his Principles. But our Blessed Lord, with all the Truth and Modesty of an Innocent Person, own'd the *Imperfection of Human Nature*, and its being shocked at such a direful Passion; but then, by the assistance of Grace, he quickly overcoming those Natural Strugglings, and with the greatest Meekness and Patience, resigns himself perfectly to the good pleasure of God. *O my Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt,* Mat. 26. 39.

Nor does Christ's crying out, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani*, make any thing for what you assert. For our Saviour there repeats only a part of a *Psalms*, which was a Prophecy

cy of him, and applicable to his present Circumstances, and therefore it cannot be expected that every word of it should as exactly agree to our *Saviour's* Condition as the Expressions he framed himself. Besides, we freely own, That our *Saviour*, when he used these words, was under the pressure of the greatest Pain and Grief that ever he knew; when he not only felt the Torments of the Cross in his Body, but had his Soul weighted down with the Grief of the whole Worlds Sins upon it; and if the sense of a Man's own Sins are apt, oftentimes, to raise a Despondency in him; How like a perfect Dereliction must our *Saviour's* Grief appear, whose Soul at one time was Oppressed with the Grief for the Sins of so many Millions of Offenders?

*Phil.* My next *Exception* is against the Story of *Christ's Resurrection*. If it were True, it would not be such a Wonderful Miracle as you make of it. For it would not be the first time that an Executed Malefactor has come to Life again.

And Histories make mention of several others, who have returned to Life again a



*Celf.* apud  
Orig. lib. 3.  
Ed. cant. p.  
125.

Id.  
Lib. 2. p. 94.  
& p. 101.

considerable time after they were seemingly dead. As *Aristeus Proconnesius* mentioned by *Herodotus*, *Hermotimus Clazomenius*, whose Soul did frequently go out of his Body and return again, *Epimenedes* of *Crete*, who slept in a Cave for Fifty Years together, and *Harminius* his Son, who lay dead for Ten Days, and Revived upon the Funeral Pile. But, for my part, I do not find any ground to believe this Relation of His Resurrection; for the matter is attested only by the Followers of Christ, whose Interest it was to make him alive again, or else People would have laughed at them for their believing a Dead Man to be the *Messias*; and some of the Witnesses were silly Women, one of which had been a crazed *Demoniack*. Now, Who can believe Matter of Fact attested at this rate? Besides, What should be the reason of Christ his being so shy of being seen after the Resurrection? And why did he not Converse as freely with his Disciples as he did before? The Relation of his dropping in so accidentally upon them, and sometimes not to be known by them, and his giving them only some imperfect Views and Glances of himself, over what he had done at other times, shews something of

Trick

Trick or Juggle in this matter more than ordinary.

*Cred.* I wonder, *Credentius*, you should be so afraid of believing a matter so well attested as our Saviour's Resurrection, and yet you can swallow down all the improbabilities and Contradictions which the contrary Opinions include in it. What a Jest is it to compare the Resurrection of Christ with the Recovery of some Hang'd Malefactors? Do you think seriously, that the death upon the Cross was any thing like our ordinary Suspension? You know in that Punishment, the miserable Criminal was well nigh Whipt to Death with Rods or Scourges; the tenderest part of his Body, the Palms of his Hands, and the Soles of his Feet were pierced thro' with Nails, and so suffered to linger out the little remains of Life in extream Pain and Anguish; and was never taken down from the Cross till he was dead, which the attending Executioners did make sure of by breaking his Bones, or stabbing his Body. Now, though it may sometimes happen, that when a Man is Executed only by Strangulation, the Constriction of his Throat may be abated, and his Blood, when it is not quite cold and stagnated, may come to circulate again. But this is

impossible Naturally to happen in a Person that was almost expiring under the Lashes of the Whips, that for several hours was torn by the Nails of the Cross, and had at last his Heart pierced through by a Soldiers Spear. The Executioners, who were used to these matters, knew very well, when the Person was fully dead, and understood the great Severity they must undergo, if they did not inflict the utmost of the Sentence upon the Criminal. Or if this was possible to have happened, it must be by great Care of the Body, by keeping it warm all the while, and cherishing it; but our Saviour's Body had the Funeral Rites only immediately bestow'd upon it, and laid only in a cold stoney Grave. The chill and damps of such a place would, in all that time, perhaps have Killed one that was not of the hardiest constitution; but a Body so miserably wounded and torn, as our Blessed L O R D's was, could never have revived.

But what are these Instances of *Aristeas* *Proconnesius*, &c. to the purpose? *Aristeas* was a Man who *Herodotus* says dropt down dead in a Fuller's House. The Fuller went to tell his Friends what happened, and when he came back, no *Aristeas* was to be found, and several Persons said they saw him at

*Instances of*  
*Aristeas*, &c.  
*confuted.*

at the same time at a distant place. Seven Years after he appeared at *Proconnesus* and made Verses. Many Years after, he appeared among the *Metapontini* in *Italy*, and advised them to Build an Altar to *Apollo* and him. Now is not this worthy stuff to be compared with the History of our Saviour's Resurrection? *Origen* Argues very well against the Silliness of this Story, because there could be no manner of use in this Prodigy. Our Saviour's Resurrection was to Confirm an excellent Institution of Religion; But it was not worth while to come into the World to Write Verses, and to occasion the Building of an Altar or two. But 'tis not worth our pains to confute this Fable, which is discarded by the most Judicious of the Heathen, by *Pliny*, *Plutarch*, *Jamblicus* and *A. Gellius*; & is a monstrous Story either of *Herodotus* his Coining, or the *Pythagoreans*, who as *Heinsius*, in his Notes upon *Maximus Tyrinus*, has shewn, were, above all the Philosophers, most pleased with such Stories. And so as for the Story of *Hermotimus*, *Lucian* looks upon it as a Fable; and *Pliny* says his Body only lay half dead. And the the long sleep of *Epimenides* *Pliny*, and *Diogenes Laertius* say it is an Idle Tale; the truth of which is, that all this time he was absent, to Study the Nature of Plants,

and *Maximus Tyrius* says, this was only a Moral Fable of *Epimenides* his own Coyn- ing, to shew forth, that Man's Life is only like a long Dream. And so lastly, as for *Harmonius* his Son, it is plain as that Story is told, in *Plato*, it was design'd only as a *Physi- ological* Fable. *Plato* himself calls it *μύθος, ἀπόλογος*, and the way of telling it im- ports as much, for he mentions there the *Sirens*, and the *Parcæ*, and such other *My- thological* Romance, which he would never have done in a true Story. But *Plutarch* owns this only to be a Fable, of which there is an Allegorical Sense to be given; for when *Plato* brings in *Eris*, the Son of *Har- monius*, as he speaks of the state of Souls, he means that the Soul is generated of Harmo- ny, and joyned to a Body, which when it leaves, it goes into the Air to be Born again. And this is the Rational and True Account of *Plato's* Story. Now is not this rare Stuff for Men, with a serious Face, to Confront with our *Saviour's Resurrection*, which was so Credibly Attested by so many exception- able Witnesses?

You cannot say that this is related like one of the Idle Tales, which People are wont to raise about Ghosts, which they fancy they have seen, it may be between sleeping and waking,

waking, in the Night time, when any thing may be made every thing by Fancy, or Fear, or Prepossession. But our *Saviour* was seen often in the broad day time, when no body expected him, and his Body handled & felt by those that doubted of the Sincerity of it. 'Tis plain, that those who saw him could not be impos'd upon by such a melancholly Fancy, by which some might think they saw a Ghost; for, some of his *Beholders* were afraid that he was a Ghost, but our *Saviour* undeceives their Mistake, and bids them *Handle him and see, for a Spirit hath not Flesh and Bones which he had.* Their Eating and Drinking with him after his *Resurrection*, and Conversing with him, at several times, during the *Forty Days*, before his *Ascension*, shews that he could be no *Phantasm*, and we may question, upon the same grounds, the Reality of any other Natural Body. All that can be said is against the Truth of the Relation; for no one can seriously believe, that such a Number of People should have a *Melancholy Dream*, that they all saw a Dead Man for so many times together, when their Eyes were wide open. But in behalf of the *Relation*, What can be more *Authentick* than this? If one or two sober Witnesses are to be credited, why

*Testimony of  
Christ's rising  
from the dead  
unexceptionable.*

not



not those that Report this? If you say that the Women who first saw Christ after his *Resurrection*, were Idle People, and not to be credited; yet *Peter*, and *John*, & not the rest of his Disciples, who saw him afterwards, could not all lie under the same Imputation. *Peter* himself denied him upon his Tryal, when he was under no Danger for sticking to him, and before he was sure he was not the *Messias*, then how should he Seal it with his *Blood* that he was so, and that he was risen from the Dead when he was sure (upon your supposition) he was an *Impostor*. Nothing could work this great Change in him, but that he was absolutely certain that he was 'rose from the Dead, to make him thus courageously to his Death own this Matter of Fact. Or, if you suppose that all the Disciples combined together to propagate this Story, yet how should *Five Hundred* more of the Brethren, whom he is said to be seen by, agree in the same Forgery? *Two* or *Three* can hardly ever so agree upon a False Story, to make things to hang together that the Cheat shall not be discovered; but that such a number of these should be in a Cabal to make such a Lie pass upon the World, and none of all these fall off or falter in their Evidence I am sure is impossible. The *Apostle St. Paul* says, when he wrote his

his Epistle to the *Corinthians* that many of those *Five Hundred Brethren* were then alive; and therefore no one can suppose him to have the Confidence to have appealed to so many Witnesses, if the matter had not been Unquestionable.

Think you not that every *Jew* or *Gentile* that had been startled with this strange *Relation*, would not have enquired when he came to *Jerusalem* of the Truth of these matters; where there were so many People that could inform him of the perfect certainty; &, if he had not received full satisfaction by indubitable Evidence, do you think that ever he would have professed such a Strange and Hazardous Faith? Imagine that a remarkable Person who was publickly Executed at *London*, and afterwards Buried, and a Guard set to attend the Grave, that no one should play Tricks with the Body; imagine that this Executed and Interred Person, should appear within a few days suppose, in a Court of Judicature, or in a Church, where *Five Hundred People* were gathered together, who all knew him, should there converse with them, be handled by them, and shew them the particular *Isferminating Marks* of his Body, think now what a Noise this would make: But if the *Five Hundred Persons* should all constantly affirm the Truth of the Thing, who

who would forbear believing it, especially if the *Relators* got only Ill-Will and Danger for Reporting it? Would not every body who came to *London* enquire into the Truth of this Story, where it was so easie to be satisfied about it, and any one of the meanest Capacity might find out whether it was a Cheat or no. For if he found that such a great Number of Eye-Witnesses did positively avow the Truth of the Matter of Fact, and all agree upon the same Circumstances in their *Relation*, at the same time when the *Government* was threatning them for the speaking of it, it is impossible but that such Person, if unprejudiced, must believe the *Relation*, though never so strange. For Men may with as much reason disbelieve their own Eyes as the concurrent Testimony of such a number of Witnesses.

*Phil.* But then there is something in the *Evangelists* related, which makes this whole matter look like a Trick, and that is the *Story of the Disciples stealing away the Body*. 'Tis certain there was some such Story among the Jews, or else the Writers of the Gospel would not have been Salving it, and when the Common People found the Body missing, 'twas easie to persuade them Christ was Risen from the Dead,

*Cred.*

*Cred.* It is allow'd, that this was a *Story* frequent among the *Jews* in the Time of *Justin Martyr*, who makes mention in two places of an Embassy, sent from the *Sanedrinn* to all the disperſed *Jews*, to take heed Of a new Sect, raised by one *Jesus*, a *Galilean*, whom they had Crucified; but his Disciples stealing away his Body, pretended he was risen from the Dead, and did ascend into Heaven. And now we have allow'd you this *Story*, What does it make for you? Nay, rather, What a wonderful Support is it of the Truth of our Saviour's Resurrection? For this *Story* continuing among the *Jews*, does very much confirm the Truth of the *Evangelist's Relation*, and if 'tis plain they tell Truth in one part of the Matter of Fact, they must be supposed to do so in the rest. If they be so open and sincere as to relate that *Malicious Story* which the *Jews* had trump'd up against them, Why should we not think they are not as Faithful in any thing else? All *St. Matthew* adds, more than what the *Sanedrinn* own in their *Circulatory Letter*, is, That there was a Guard set, which is very probable, for they who believed Christ to be an Impostor, and who, they knew, had Foretold to his Disciples That he would Rise again the Third Day, would naturally have suspected that such a Trick might be plaid

plaid; but if they took care to Guard the *Sepulchre* for Three or Four Days, they knew they should render then the *Imposture* most manifest. Therefore, I say, there is no reason to suspect the Truth of *St. Matthew's Relation* as to the Guard, but that he told the *Story* just as 'twas Related among the *Jews* in the time when he *Wrote*. For no one can suppose he was so Confident, as to make mention of *Soldiers* being placed about the *Sepulchre* to Watch, if there had been no such Thing, and when there were so many People alive who could have Contradicted it.

And now see how clearly this proves the *Truth of Christ's Resurrection*. For this manifestly evinces, That our *Saviour* had Predicted his *Resurrection*, which made the *Jews* so Cautious against his Disciples practising any thing seemingly to make good their Master's Word. But unless *Jesus Christ* really knew he was to Rise again, How could he be so hardy to assert it? If he design'd only an *Imposture* upon the World, and to have the Credit of being the Founder of a *New Religion*, this was the most Imprudent Means in the World to effect it. For if he did not Rise again after his *Death*, all his Followers must have left his *New Religion* for shame, as being set up by

by a *Lying Deceiver*. But however, no *Impostor* in the World could be so Silly, to put his *Religion* in Danger of Vanishing within Three Days after his *Death*. If an *Impostor* were not a perfect *Idiot*, he would allow himself more time than this before he would publickly be proclaimed a *Cheat*; he would probably have allowed *Fifty* or an *Hundred Years* before his *Resurrection*, so that before *that time* his Friends might be *Dead*, that they might not upbraid his Memory with the *Deceit*, and that in *that time*, the New *Sett* might get such *Strength* and *Number*, as to be able to Substist, notwithstanding a *Disappointment*. Therefore, unless Christ knew certainly he was to Rise again in *three Days*, he would never have pretended to it; for this would have been at once to Destroy the Religion he had been so long a Preaching, and in Three Days time after his *death* not to have one Disciple left. You cannot say he had hopes his Disciples would convey away his Body, for *that* was too hazardous an Enterprize for them to undertake, who forsook him upon his Trial only; nor could those whom you suppose so grossly to be abused by him, bear him so much *good-will*, as to support his *Credit*, after he had so Basely imposed upon them.

Again,



Again, This *Story* carries with it a Crowd of Improbabilities and Contradictions. Suppose the Disciples had a mind to Steal his Body away, yet how should they dare to Attempt it? Would a few poor unarmed Men venture to break open a Grave which was surrounded with *Soldiers*? But you'll say, The *Soldiers* were negligent and asleep. But how could the Disciples suppose that the *Soldiers* should be so negligent? And how came they to nick the Time so exactly when they were all asleep? For they cannot be supposed to have slept all the time they were upon the Guard. Or how came none of them to wake all the time they were engaged in this *Theft*? To Role such a great Stone away from the Mouth of a Cave must take up a considerable time, and would have made so much noise as would, in all probability, have roused up a drowsy Soldier, and then the Enterprize had been forever spoiled, and the Attempters ruin'd. But suppose them to have Roled away the Stone with all the Silence and Success imaginable, they, to be sure, would venture no Hazard more, but would have flunk away with the Body as fast as they could. But if the Disciples did Steal away the Body, they must Act like Mad Men in the mid'st of such Dangers; for there they stay to Strip the

the Body, and lay the Napkin in one part of the Sepulchre, and wrap up the Grave Cloaths in the other, as *two* or *three* of the *Evangelists* relate the *matter*, who you your self cannot imagine to Falsifie in such a *Circumstantial Relation*. And pray consider how much time would be taken up in stripping off the Grave Cloaths from an *Easter* Corps. Those Grave Cloaths were a sort of *Fasciæ*, or thin slips of Linnen, which were rolled round the Body, so that about a Dead Body there might be many Score Yards of Filleting, which being bound over those Viscous Balsams they used, must make it a long Work to unroll so much Bindage. But that the Disciples should do all this unnecessary Work in the midst of so much Danger, and not immediately carry off the Body, which they might as well have done without it, is a Point, *Philologus*, that I confess we Christians have not Faith to believe.

*Phil.* But still you drop a Material Thing objected, *Why Christ should be so shy of his Appearance after his Resurrection*. How do you get over that?

*Cred.* You make a very Ill Construction of these Passages of our Saviour's Life, to think that there was any Trick plaid by the *Apostles*, because our Saviour did not so frequently

quently Converse with the Disciples as he did before. For our *Saviour* appear'd to them, so often, and in such a manner, as was sufficient to overcome the greatest *Doubtfulness*, and the most *Obstinate Incredulity*.

There are a great many times which he is Recorded, in that short *History* of the *Gospel*, to have appeared to his Disciples, and probably there were many more. He shew'd himself to the *Women* just after his *Resurrection*; after that to *Peter* alone; and then to the whole Number of the *Apostles*: At another time, when they were Fishing in the Sea, when he caused them to catch such a *miraculous draught* of Fishes. At another time, he Eat and Drank with them, and gave them some principal *Points of Instruction*; and when they were met together to Pray, he stood in the midst of them. He Talked with some of them as he went to *Emaus*. And, at another time, he complied with the *doubtful temper* of *Thomas*, and suffered him to view his *Crucified Body*, and to thrust his hands into his side. At another time, he was seen of the *Five Hundred Brethren*, mentioned by *St. Paul*, besides, the amazing wonder of his *Ascension*, which was seen by all the *Apostles*. Now all these times here mentioned were within *Forty Days* after his

Re-

Resurrection, so that if he appeared at no other time but what is in *Scripture* Recorded, you cannot say *he was shy of his Conversation*, to be in the Disciples Company so often in so short a time. Which makes *St. Luke* say plainly, *That he was seen of them Forty Days*, Acts 1. 3. But I cannot imagine what Trick you can fancy in *this*; you have no grounds to imagine that any of the Apostles set up a *suppositions* Christ, which they were afraid of having too narrowly viewed; for *that* strict Examination he underwent of his Hands and Sides, does for ever confute such a Fancy; and the Disciples, by *once* or *twice* Conversing with him, were as sure it was he, as if they had seen him an Hundred times.

But supposing our Saviour did not so often Converse with his Disciples, and others, as before, there was a very good Reason for it. Before his death, he was upon his *Prophetick* Office, when he was obliged to Teach the World the *Excellent Morality of his Institution*, to make known the *Will of God in relation to the Mediatorship of the Messias*, and to Exhibit in himself the most shining Example which ever came into the World. But after his Resurrection *this* Work was over; and it was not reasonable, that the *Eternal Son of God* should Converse with Mankind more

than *absolute necessity*, or the Reason of Things required.

Nay, Who can tell, but that one Reason why our Saviour did not appear so publicly among all sorts of Persons, as he did before, was, Because by this he would shew an *eminent Example* of God's Vengeance upon the Wicked Jews, by giving them occasion to be hardened in their *Infidelity*, till God, *in his good time*, shall be pleased to open their *Eyes* and *Hearts*, that they, as well as others, may see and feel the *Light* and *Comfort* of the *Gospel*. If our Saviour had appeared every day in the sight of his Crucifiers, they would have been forced to have believed in him; but God Almighty did not see Reason to afford so great Blessings to such Ill-disposed, Malicious and Ungrateful Men.

And there may be another Reason for our Saviour's sequestering himself, more than ordinary, from the Conversation of this World, because, though his *Humanity* was not perfectly Glorified, yet by having his Soul seperated for a time from the Body, and having partaken of the Joys of Paradise, his Human Nature must be considerably weaned from the Things of this Life, and being now more let into the Spiritual World, his Conversation would be more  
than

than before there. He Converſed with his Diſciples and Followers, as much as was requiſite to ſtrengthen their Faith, and to do them Good, but was Obliged to Aſſociate other times with thoſe bleſſed Inhabitants of the Intellectual World, to which he was ſince his Reſurrection more nearly Allied.

*Phill.* Well ! ſuppoſing all this True, yet the Heathens themſelves have as much to ſay for their Philoſopher *Apollonius Tyanæus*. For the Gods, in a Dream, Admoniſhed the Mother of the Birth of this great Infant, and when he was Born, a flaſh of Lightning fell down from the Heaven to the Earth.

(a) He, as well as Chriſt, broke off the Familiarity which one had with a *Dæmon*. (b) He Raiſed a young Maid at *Rome* from Death to Life. (c) Being bound in Fetters, he ſhook them off at his pleaſure. (d) And being to answer an Accuſation before *Domitian*, Vanished out of his ſight. (e) He, as well as the Apoſtles, had by Inſpiration the gift of all Tongues. (f) And what is the moſt ſurprizing Miracle of all, and equal to any you pretend of Chriſt, after he was Dead he roſe to Life again, and Taught the Rules of his Philoſophy. (g)

(a) *Philoptra*  
ti Hiſt. lib.

1. cap. 4.

(b) Id. lib. 4.  
cap. 8.

(c) Id. lib. 4.  
cap. 10.

(d) Id. lib. 7.  
cap. 10.

(e) Id. lib. 8.  
cap. 12.

(f) Id. lib. 1,  
cap. 13.

(g) *Phil.* lib.  
8. cap. 13.



Indeed, for my part, I am inclined to believe all Miracles alike; but if you are to be guided by these for the Truth of Opinions, why is not *Apollonius* his Philosophy as well attested as the Religion of Christ? Besides, as *Hierocles* in *Eusebius* observes, the wonderful Actions of this great Philosopher, are not related, like those of Christ, by such Obscure Men as *Peter* and *Paul*, but by Learned Men and Philosophers, as *Damnis*, *Maximus*, and *Philostratus*. The like Miraculous Power was in *Abaris*, another *Pythagorick* Philosopher, who used to fly through the Air upon a wing-  
 apud Orig. ed Arrow; and yet, as *Celsus*  
 lib. 3. says, *He was not for this reputed as a God.*

*Cred.* It is but a vain Cavil, and the poor Refuge of a Routed Argument, to compare the Character of *Apollonius* with that of our Blessed Lord; between which, there is as wide a difference as there is between the History of *Julius Caesar* and that of *Guy of Warwick*. For the History of the Actions of Christ, were wrote by Men who either Conversed with, or lived at the same time, with Him, and all of them to a tittle agree in the most material Passages of his Life. But *Apollonius* his History is owing to *Philostratus*, a Man who lived more than a Hundred

dred Years after him, and pretends he had his Memoirs from the Talk of the People in the Cities where *Apollonius* had Converſed, which muſt needs be very Credible *Stories*, when they had been handed about by *Hearſay* for ſo many Years. The Actions of Chriſt were Wrote by the Apoſtles, who laid down their Lives for the Truth; but *Philoſtratus* ventured nothing for the Writing his Hiſtory, but was greatly encouraged, to Write ſome ſtrange *Stories* of the *Philophers* by the Empreſs *Julia*. For ſhe was a *Philophick Lady*, who had always a great Number of *Rhetors*, *Sophiſts*, and *Philophers* about her, and therefore was glad to hear the Account of the Lives and Studies of ſuch Famous Men as ſhe admired. Indeed, *Philoſtratus* ſays, *That a great deal of Apollonius his Life was taken from the Commentaries of Damis, the Companion of Apollonius, which he himſelf had never publiſhed; but ſome body had communicated to the Empreſs; ſo that 'tis probable that That was a Forgery too, becauſe it was never heard of before that time, which containing ſuch Remarkable Stories, 'tis almoſt impoſſible it ſhould not.* And as for this *Damis*, according to the Character *Philoſtratus* gives of him, *he was a Man of very little Judgment*, as appears all along in his Diſputes

with *Apollonius*. But 'tis plain, by a transitory view of this History, that it was compiled only to shew the Reading and Learning of the Author, and rather to give descriptions of the Places and Customs of the People, with whom *Apollonius* Conversed, than to Write the Actions of that *Philosopher*. He runs off in every Page to things perfectly Foreign to the Business of *Apollonius*, and is for edging in all the fine Stories he ever met with among the *Geographers* and *Naturalists*; as is plain, by his Talking so much of the *Armenian* Panthers, Elephants, Phoenixes, Griffins, and Satyrs. There are in it several foolish Poetical Stories of *Tantalus*, *Hercules*, *Prometheus* and *Mnemon*; many Ridiculous Forgeries of the *Bramins* keeping Tubs of Rain and Thunder by them, of the Earths swelling just like the Waves of the Sea by the Motion of a *Bramins* Wand; and one of a Magical Feast, where the Tables and Chairs, Meat and Drink, came in of their own accord into the Entertainment.

In other places, there is more Legendary Stuff, of Apes as large as a Man, of other Beasts with a Mans Head and a Lions Body, of Wool growing out of the Ground like Grass, and of Women half whose Bodies were white, and the other half black, of *Apollonius*

*pollonius* his understanding the *Language* of *Birds* and *Beasts*, of his *Feeding upon Dragons Hearts*, *Dragons*, which in that place were so *Numerous*, that the *Inhabitants* Hunted them as we do *Hares*.

Now though these *Stories* might pass off well enough in *Philostratus* his *Time*, when *Geography* was but little understood; yet the *observation* of *Modern Travellers*, has proved all to be *Ridiculous Lies*; and therefore the other *Stories* which he tells of his *Philosopher*, deserve no more *Credit*. But above all you may observe the *inconsistency* of the *Author*, who when he allows *Apollonius* the *Miraculous Gift* of *Tongues*, he not long after forgets himself, and makes him stand in need of an *Interpreter* to Talk to *Phraotes*. And as for the *Miracles* he is reported to have done, they are all *Idle inconsistent Tales*, which are sufficiently exposed by *Eusebius*, in his Answer to *Hierocles* his *Philalethe*. It would be endless to make all the *Remarks* that might be upon the *Lies* and *Inconsistencies* of this silly *Author*; and perhaps, if *Mr. Blunt* had translated the whole *History*, as he has done the two *First Books* for the use of the *Infidels*, he had done us no great *Mischief*; for the *Follies* of this affected *Romance*, compared with the plain *History* of the *New Testament*, demonstrate

strate, to all Sensible Men, how those Writings, though *composed* by Unlearned Men, do infinitely surpass the *composition* of this Book-read *Philosopher*; for, granting the Gospel only a *Romance*, the *Apostles* in Writing it have given Ten times a better Picture of a *Philosophick Mind*, in the History of *Jesus Christ*, than *Philostratus* has given in the wretched Pedantick Character of *Apollonius*.

But 'tis plain, that *Philostratus* either undertook, or was put upon Writing this History, to confront the Miracles of our Blessed Lord.

*Philostratus set on to forge his History.*

The Heathen of that Age perceived the quick growth of *Christianity*, and the Incontestible *Proof* of the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles, which brought so many over to that Faith; and therefore the best way they had for the support of their *Superstition*, was to trump up a *Philosopher*, who did as many Miracles for the support of *Paganism*, as Christ had for the Gospel; so that by this Fraud, they got an *Apollonius* to compare with the Miracles, and a *San-choniathon* with the Antiquity of the Bible. But the mishap was, *Philostratus* could not play his Game so cunningly as *Philo Biblius* did. For his *Romantick Tales*, which every Traveller can *disprove*, betray the Cheat,

as also the Affectation of Coyning Miracles so justly parallel to those of our *Saviour*, that he seems to have had the *Gospel* lying before him, when he wrote this Book.

He found there our *Saviour* to be called the *Son of God*, and therefore he makes his *Philosophick Hero* to be reputed the *Son of Jupiter*; the cunning *Sophist* thought it a mighty fetch, that he would not stile him the *Son of Apollo* or *Neptune*, because that would be to render him less than *Jesus Christ*, who was reputed the *Son of the most High God*, and therefore he chuses *Jupiter* above all others to Entitle him to. But then, because the *Jews* and *Heathens* usually blamed our *Saviour* for pretending to the *Divine Nature*, or to be the *Son of God*; therefore our *Sophists Hero* must be so Modest as to refuse this great Title, which the *Inhabitants* of *Tyana* gave him, and own himself only to be *Apollonius* his Son. He finds in the *Gospel*, that *Christ* cured several *Demoniacks*, and therefore *Apollonius* must break off the *Correspondence* and *Congress* which a Man frequently had with a *Lamia*, and by good *Counsel* dehort him from such a wicked *Consequence*. And that the Author of this *Story* had an Eye upon the *Gospel* is evident, from the

Forged it in  
Imitation of  
the Gospel  
Miracles.



the *Ingenious Remark* of *Huetius*, who observes that *Philostratus* uses the very words of *St. Luke*, cap. 8. 28. speaking of the Devil which our Saviour cast out. Upon these words of *Apollonius*, says *Philostratus*, *The Spirit was like to one that wept* καὶ ἰδὼν μὴ βασανίζεν αὐτὸν and beseeched him not to Torment it; which is the same which the wicked Spirit in Scripture cries out *Μὴ οὐαὶ σοὶ μὴ με βασανίζῃς* I beseech thee Torment me not. Now any one who considers the great Latitude of Expression in the Greek Tongue, and the peculiar Phrasology of the New Testament, can hardly think *Philostratus* lighted upon this Expression by chance.

And from the same History of this *Demoniak* in the Gospel, he borrows his Fable of the Young Man of *Corcyra*, who was possessed by a Spirit. The Devil which was in the *Gadarene* of the Gospel, after he was gone out of the Man, had a License to enter into the Herd of Swine: And so *Apollonius* is made to command the Spirit, when it left the *Corcyrean*, to tumble down a Statue. And I doubt not but, upon the same Account, *Apollonius* is feigned to Raise up the Maid at *Rome*, almost in the same manner which our Saviour did *Jaicus* his Daughter. And because our Saviour shew'd a Magnanimous Contempt of Death, by resolving to go to *Jerusalem*

*Jerusalem*, where he was sure to be Betray'd, and from which some of his Disciples dissuaded him: Therefore *Apollonius* must not come behind hand in Bravery neither, but *Demetrius* must tell him, how *Dangerous* it was to come to *Rome*, for fear of *Domitian*, who was noted for his ill treatment of *Philosophers*; and then after this *Dehortation* he is made courageously to resolve upon it. And the like Foolish Affectation of a *Parity* with Christ, was the Occasion of the Fable of this Man's appearing after Death, which was only to a Young Man, who had long Watched, and Prayed to *Apollonius*, That he would appear to him, and give him satisfaction concerning the Immortality of the soul, after which he fell asleep, and of a sudden cries out, *I believe thee, O Tyaneus*. And when his Company asked him what he meant by this. *Oh!* says he, *Do you not see Apollonius?* And when they said *No*, but they would give any thing to see him; he reply'd, *He appeared to him for his satisfaction, being invisible to others*; and so goes on to tell them what *Apollonius* said of a Future State. And this is the substance of the *History* of this *Man of Straw*, which the *Heathens* thought fit to set up against our Blessed Saviour; but how Silly the *Imposture* looks and how wretched the *Parallel* is, I leave any one to judge,

judge, who will give himself the pains to Read *Philostratus* his *Book*. But I cannot but wonder at the Partiality of some of you *Deists*, to make such a Stir in crying up this *History of Philostratus*, and running down the *Scriptures*; when I am sure you would never let us be quiet, if you could find in the *Gospel* such strange *Stories of Magical Feasts*, of *Griffins* and *Dragons*, as you do in him.

But I pray, Sir, with what confidence can you compare a Man, whom you can't call a *good Man*, with *Jesus Christ*, whose Life was a *Pattern of Unspotted Purity*? *Apollonius* can never be excused for spending so many Years in an idle Vagrant Life; but what can you say in behalf of his *common Swearing*, it being his usage to Swear By *Jupiter* at all turns? Or how can you excuse him from *Idolatry* in Sacrificing to the Sun? And where was his Justice in adjudging another Man's possession to his Adversary, because he was a Wiser Man and a more Devout Worshipper of the Gods? *Phil. lib. 2. cap. 15.*

As for the Argument of *Hierocles*, who asserts, *That the Gospel is less to be believed than this History, because this was wrote by Learned Men, but these by Illiterate Men and Jugglers.* I say, that is only a *Malicious Cavil*; for we defie the whole Tribe of *Infidels* to find any Juggle in the *Gospel History*; a Book, which is full of plain unaffected Relations of *Matter of Fact*. But any body, but who can digest Sir *John Mandevil's Travels*, or *Orlando Furioso*, will be sick of *Philostratus*. And I must further add, that this *Moralist* is very much out in his *Logick* to say, *That an History is at all the more questionable, because it was wrote by a plain Illiterate Man.* For if it had been wrote by a Man of Letters, by a cunning *Sophist*, who had been used to Counterfeit Stiles, and to Feign Letters and Speeches, and to make *Ethiopopæia's*, a Man might be apt to doubt that all was Forged by the Wit of this Scholar, who could make all the parts of a *Romance* hang together, and look like a *True History*; but no Reasonable Man can suspect such a Fraud to be plaid successfully by *Uneducated Publicans* or *Fishermen*.

*Apostles more credible than Philostratus, because Unlearned.*

And

*Story of Abaris  
Ridiculous*

And Lastly, as for the Story of *Abaris* which you mention, it is one of the *Pythagorick Τερατολογίαι*, or Wonderful Tales, which that *Sect*, as we observed before, above all others were fond of; and is altogether as Ridiculous as our common Peoples Talk of Witches riding upon Broomsticks.

When *Celsus* compares *Abaris* with *Christ*, *Origen* asks the question, *What was Mankind benefitted by Abaris his riding upon an Arrow? It was not worth the while that Omnipotence should exert it self for such an idle Miracle. But when (says he) we say our Jesus was taken up into Glory, I see an Institution of Religion, the Author of which God Almighty by his Miracles does recommend; that Men contending for this not as for Human Disciplines, but as for a Divine Doctrine, they may dedicate themselves to God over all, and do all things to please him.*

*Celsus* apud  
*Origen.* lib.  
1. *Judeus*  
apud *Lim-*  
*borch* in di-  
spat. cum *E-*  
*rud.* *Jud.* p.  
133. *Blounts*  
Notes on  
*Philost.* p.28.

*Phil.* Having now done with the Life and Actions of *Christ*, I beg leave to speak a Word or two of his Apostles. For my part, I am not satisfied of the Sincerity of their Proceedings, & I'm apt to suspect, that they put a Trick upon the World in Coyning a number of strange Stories to amuse

Man\*

Mankind, the better to make the Doctrine they Preached to be believed. There is a great Itch in Mankind after Applause and Admiration, and I doubt not but that these Men were set mightily agog to be Ringleaders of a New Sect; and when they found the People so very forward to believe what they said, they would be sure not to be wanting in variety of strange Tales to impose upon their Credulity. And this I take to be a fair account of the many of those repeated Miracles, which they vouched to support the Doctrine of their Master.

*Cred.* You call in question the Truth of Matters of Fact which passed above 1600 Years ago, which to be sure were well examined into when they were first reported, which were acquiesced in by unprejudic'd Men, and in the belief of which great part of the World have stood in possession ever since. It is usually a difficult thing to prove Matters of Fact of so long standing, and 'tis hardly ingenuous to desire the proof of what was well look'd into at first, and has so long a time been unquestioned. Suppose your Great-Grandfather had lost an Estate by a Suit of Law in Queen *Elizabeth's* Time, by the positive unexceptionable Evidence of his Adversaries Witnesses, and none of your

*The Apostles  
not Counter-  
feits.*



Family ever questioned the Possessor's Title since ; Do you think it fair for you now to arraign the Integrity of those Witnesses, which your Predecessors at that time were better able and as willing to do, if they had any pretence for it ? And if the Apostles had been such Cheats as you imagine, how come People so long after to discover the Imposture ; which the *Jews* and *Heathens* • who lived at the same time with them, were not able to do ? If this were so, how come they, who had such advantageous Opportunities to examine into the Matters of Fact, to believe such Lying Stories, and such a late Progeny of Mankind be so lucky to find out the Cheat ? But because the Incredulous may receive all possible satisfaction, which the most obstinate and unreasonable of them may require ; let us consider what satisfaction a Man can possibly require of the Certainty of Matters of Fact done so long ago, in relation to the Reporters of them. I know the usual way is to have recourse to unexceptionable History of the time when they were said to be done ; but because I shall have occasion to prove to them the Authority of the Books of the *Holy Scriptures* hereafter, I shall wave that now, and only speak of the first great Witnesses of the Christian Reli-

Religion, and the Credibility of what they attested.

If a Man was to lay his thoughts together, and pensively to consider what he would desire in order to his satisfaction, That the Witnesses of *Matters of Fact* so long ago spoke True; he could not desire more than this: That the Men, who Reported those Things, were such *good honest Men*, that they would not tell a solemn Lie; That they were Men of Understanding enough, to know the full Truth of the Things they related; that they had not Learning or Cunning enough to frame an intricate *Imposture*; That they were of such a Number, that they could not all be deceived, and their Agreement in their Reports such, that they could not be *Deceivers*; That they should receive no Advantage by their Relation; That the Time and Place where they said this was done, were easily to be Examined into; And lastly, That they did constantly persist in what they said, as to be willing to Suffer or Die for the Truth of it. A Man would be very *unreasonable* to require half these *Qualifications* for every *Testimony* he assents to; but where they are all found, a Man must be a *Sceptick* who does not give his assent to a Matter so attested. Now the *Aposiles* have all these *Qualifications* in the

*Testimony they give of our Saviours Doctrine and Miracles.*

1. *They appear to be Honest and Because Good Good Men.* Their main design  
Men. was To Persuade Men to lead

*Good and Holy Lives ; To Teach* them to *leave off Idolatry and Polytheism*, and to *serve the One and True God*, not to place their *Holiness in Ceremonious Actions*, but in *Acts of Piety and Charity*. And in the whole course of their Lives they were never Taxed with any remarkable Wickedness ; but contrariwise, they were noted for being Eminently Exemplary for *Devotion, Mortification, and Self-Denial*. Now why should not the *Testimony* of such Men be believed ? What though the Matter they relate be very strange and unusual, as *that our Saviour did such wonderful Miracles in confirmation of his Doctrines, and 'rose again from the Dead ?* Yet it is more incredible, That so many *Honest and Good Men* should, of a sudden, abandon all Shame and Honesty, and turn Liars and Cheats.

2. *The Apostles were very good*  
*Because they* Judges of the Matters they reported,  
*knew the mat-* and were sure they understood them  
*ters they rela-* so well, they could not be deceived  
*ted.* in them. If they had related  
Things which they did not understand,  
their

their *Testimony* was not to be valued. Indeed, if some ordinary *Mechanicks* were to make Report of the *Observations* of a Learned *Mathematician*, they might, by mistake, represent an *Astronomer* for a *Conjurer*; because *Mathematicks* was a Thing as much above their understanding as *Necromancy*. But such *Mechanicks* were as good Judges of what they heard or felt or saw, as the best *Philosopher* in the World. They saw Dead Men raised to Life, Blind Men have their Eyes, and Lame Men their Limbs restored them; they, several times, saw and handled Christ after his Resurrection, and viewed him when he was caught up into Heaven. These were *Matters of Fact*, which required no great Capacities to be Judges of the Truth of; and if Men had but their *Senses* and *common Understandings* it was enough.

3. Neither had the *Aposiles* Learning and Cunning enough to carry on such an intricate Imposture of so many parts as the Gospel does consist of. It required a greater Compass of Understanding to frame such an excellent System of *Morality*, to give such an extraordinary Account of the satisfaction for Sin, and Nature and Office of a Mediator; to feign the Life and A-

Because not  
Cunning enough  
to carry on such a  
cheat.

ctions of a *Messias*, which should so exactly correspond with the old *Prophecies*, and the *Types*, and *Prefigurations* of the *Mosaical Law*; to suit such Rewards and Punishments in another Life, which should be so agreeable to Reason, and so worthy of God. Such poor illiterate Men, were no more able to contrive such a Wise and Noble Institution, than they were to Frame a World. The Actions of our *Saviour* are so various, and so depending one upon another, there is such a Correspondence between his *Prophetick*, *Priestly* and *Kingly Office*, that it is not in the power of the Wit and Learning of Man to draw up such a Rational Scheme of a Mediatorship; much less could it be done by those unlettered Men, who Preached and attested these things.

4. *There might be some Exception*  
*Because all Witnesses* against the Testimony of the Apo-  
*nessed the same.* stles, *if there had been but one or*  
*two Witnesses of what they declar'd.*

Suppose a cunning Man might deceive one or two simple ones, or their own Fancy might impose upon them; and that the same might possibly lay their Heads together to attest a Falsity, and make the parts of it hang pretty well together. Yet this is impossible to be supposed in such a number as attested the Miracles and Doctrine of Christ,

Christ. He had *Twelve* chosen Disciples, which Preached the *Gospel* throughout all the *World* in the same uniform way, so many of which could never have agreed upon a *Cheat*, and have carried it on after the same manner. 'Tis hard to get so many into such an *Ill Design*; but 'tis yet harder to suppose that none of them all should Vary in a *Falsity*. Some of them would certainly have been found Clashing in their telling such a long *Sham-Story*, which the cunning'st Man could hardly have told twice the same way. But these were not all the *Witnesses* of the *Truth* of the *Gospel*, there were many *Thousands* of His *Auditors* which heard Him *Preach* and saw His *Miracles*, and Five Hundred Men saw Him alive after His *Crucifixion*; and 'tis impossible that so many Men could be deceived, or combine together in a *Cheat* to impose upon the *World*.

5. *When a Witness has any Interest to carry on by a strange Relation, there may be some grounds to suspect his Veracity; but when Men could get nothing by it, as was the case of the Apostles, what reason is there why they should not be believed?* Indeed if they could have got more *Mony* by *Preaching* than by *Fishing*, there was then some ground to

*Because they got nothing by it.*



suspect the Truth of what they said ; but they, Poor Men ! got nothing by all their *Trouble* and *Fatigue* of their *Ministry*, and lived in as mean a condition as they did before. If they had consider'd their *Interest* and *Ease*, they would have follow'd their *Manual Occupations* still, which had more Profit attending them, and less *Trouble* and *Danger*. If they had a mind to be Rich or Great, they would have curry'd Favour with the *Jews* or *Romans*, who had the command of the *Wealth* and *Honour* of that Place ; but they would never have applied themselves to the common People, who were so far from being able to better the Condition of the *Apostles*, that for the most part they were hardly able to subsist themselves.

6. If a *Witness* who told a strange Story, had laid the *Scene* of the *Action* many Hundred of Miles off in some unfrequented part of the World, as *Philostatus* does many of his Stories in the *East-Indies* ; or if he had told a Hear-say Tale, done out of the memory of Man, there would be good reason to distrust his Evidence. But when the *Apostles* attest *Matters of Fact*, done in the same City wherein they gave their Evidence, and some

*Because the Truth of what they said was easily Examined.*

of which (as particularly *Christ's Resurrection*) they say happen'd but a few Months before, this looks Natural and Free; and Men had the *opportunity* of Examining into and satisfying themselves in these matters. But if they had made the Story, they would have been Mad Men to lay the Scene of it so nigh home, and within so little a time, when it was *ten thousand to one* but that the Cheat had been detected.

7. There are indeed some Men in the World, who will not stick to tell a strange Lie, it may be several times over, as long as they are like to lose nothing by it, but if this be like to bring them into any trouble, they then fall to mincing and palliating the Matter; or if they can get off no other way, will own they did not speak True. For it cannot be supposed, that any Liar has that Regard to the Reputation of speaking Truth, as to venture any hazard for it. Then how can it ever be supposed, that the *Apostles* should lay down their Lives in Defence of an idle Story they had made? They might tell indeed such a strange Tale of a Man that rose from the Dead, and ascended into Heaven, out of Vanity, when they saw People pleased with the strangeness of the Relation; and admired them for it; but this

*Because they  
suffered and  
died for their  
Doctrine.*

this could last no longer than they could do it with *Impunity*, the *Banter* would be spoiled when they came before the *Sanedrin* or *Judges*, where nothing but *Death* was to be expected from those who persisted in a *Religious Imposture*. Well, but you may say, that they having often told a *Lie*, rather than undergo the shame of *Retracting* it, they would suffer any thing for it. This is altogether as *miraculous*, if it were true, as those *Miracles* they vouched; such a thing was never known in Nature. A Man that has the *baseness* to tell a solemn *Lie*, can never have the *courage* to *Die* for it. We have a multitude of instances of *Cheats*, when they have been brought into danger, discovering themselves and flying to Mercy; but I defy you to give an instance of any who died for a *Fraud*, when they might have been sav'd for *detecting* it. Or if it was possible, that such a *vain-glorious Coxcomb* could be found once in an Age; you cannot suppose that all the *First Propagators* of *Christianity* were such. Put your self, *Philologus*, in the *Apostles* places, or any other *Gentleman*, if you will, of the most *generous Education*, who has a greater Sense of *Honour* than these *Poor Men*, and set *death* before you on one side, and the *Recantation* of an idle *Story* on the other, and think if you could think fit to

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Part III. *with a Theist.* 219

to Die to carry on the Banter; and would not chuse rather to be laughed at, than to be Martyrs for a *Foolish Tale*. Now if Men of Honour would do this, which would be such a *Mortification* to them, rather than lose their lives; what spark of *Honour* can any suppose more in the breasts of those plain *Fisher-men*, that should make them that they would rather *die* than to say any thing contrary to what they had *Preached*?

*Phil.* Good Sir, you run on a little too fast in behalf of the *Apostles*, for give me leave to tell you, that their *Preaching* was not so void of Gain, nor so full of Hazard as you pretend. If they had got *nothing* by their *New Doctrine*, they had *nothing* to lose. And it was an ample *Reward* to poor *Fisher-men*, to be lookt on as inspired Men, and to have all their *Followers* submit themselves to them. *Peter*, 'tis true, left his *Torn Nets*, his *Leaky Boats*, and *simple Companions*; but by being an *Apostle*, his Words were admired as *Oracles*, and he sat at the Helm in *Religious Matters*. And to be sure wherever the *Apostles* went, there was good Chear provided for them. Besides, there were gatherings in the *New-planted Churches*, 2 *Cor.* 8. and there is no doubt to be made, but the *Apostles* had their share in these;  
and

Judæus apud  
Limb. p. 133,  
and 134.

and St. Paul seems to put in plainly for it, alledging that Passage of the Law, *Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the Ox that treadeth out the Corn.* Nay, there must be considerable Summs of Money at the Apostles disposing; for in the *Acts of the Apostles* it is said, *That the Believers sold all that they had, and laid the price at the Apostles feet.* Now all this was Honour and Profit enough for such Men as these: It was no great Riches indeed, but it was a comfortable Maintenance. And how many Men are there that venture their Necks every day for as little? Besides, I dont see what great Danger they incurred by their *Preaching.* The greatest Danger was from the Jews, who had Laws against such *Impostures*, and therefore they very wisely turned to the *Gentiles.* And among them there was little danger, as they ordered matters; for they only Preached Jesus Christ to be the *Son of God*, and that there was a *Resurrection*, and the like, which were Things that might go down well enough with the *Heathen World*; but I dont find them any where in the *New Testament* Preaching against *Idolatry*, which if they had done, the Zealous *Heathens* would have immediately Crucified them. And 'twas upon this Account, that the Apostles inveigh so much against the *False Brethren*, who were those

those that were betray'd to the *Heathens*, That they run down *Idolatry* in private. Besides, it does not appear, but that they did *avoid Suffering* as much as they could; for when *St. Paul* was called in question for Teaching contrary to the Law of *Moses*, he with a great deal of *Dexterity* avoids the Charge, pretending only *that for the Resurrection of the Dead, and for seeing a Vision he was called in question*, which, though they were not the *points* he was charged with, yet they served to set the *Pharisees* and *Saducees* a Quarrelling, and so freed him from Danger, *that time, by that Ingenious Prevarication.*

*Cred.* I will speak in order to the *Objections* you have here raised. You say the Apostles had *nothing to lose*, and therefore they might venture upon the *Preaching the Gospel*. What though they had no *Riches* to venture, they had the *Reputation of Honest Men*, which few People will Care to lose for the sake of an *Imposture*; for an *Honest Man*, if never so Poor, would not care to be *counted a Cheat*. And if they had no *Reputation*, they had their *Liberty and Lives* to lose, and no one, of any sense, would care to venture *these*, upon no better a Prospect than you can suppose the Apostles

*Apostles ventured their Lives and Liberties.*



Apostles to have had, for Goals and Gallowses.

But you say, *They got Victuals by it, and the Honour of being the Heads of a Religious Party, and the disposal of the Peoples Alms.*

*And did not Preach for vain Glory or Applause.*

And, indeed, wonderous Matters are all these, to make Men venture their Necks for them. It does not appear, but that they lived as well upon their Trade as this comes to. But supposing they Preached only for a *Livelihood*, yet, Was it worth while for them to undergo so much Pains and Danger for a little Victuals? See the great Comforts of the Apostleship, which did, as you say, invite Men to it upon account of Gain. They endured *Tribulation, Disfress, Persecution, Famine and Nakedness, Peril and Sword*, Rom. 8. 35. *They were made a Spectacle to the World, to Angels and Men, and were Fools for Christ's sake, they were Hungry and Thirsty, Naked and Buffeted, and had no certain Dwelling Place. St. Paul was Five times whipped by the Jews, Three times beaten with Rods, Once Stoned, and frequent in Prisons, &c.* 2 Cor. 11. and got his own Livelihood by his own Hands, though he had a more liberal Education. But suppose they had got their Vi-  
ctuals

ctuals *Gratis*, What Proportion do all these Troubles and Torments bear to such a small Conveniency?

But it is an *Uncharitable Falsity* to say, The Apostles gained any thing by the Collections which were made. The Contributions, which were first made, were laid down before the Apostles, but what advantage did they make of them, but only to Relieve the Poor? If the Apostles indirectly had reaped any Profit from these, they would have kept them still in their own hands; but they instituted the Office of *Deacons* to discharge that Trust, which they would never have done, if they had Preached the Gospel for the sake of the Advantage they *made* by such *Contributions*. And the *Collections* mention'd by St. Paul, 2 Cor. 8. were only for Relieving the Poor at *Hierusalem* in a great Famine, which were intirely sent thither without the Apostles participating of any part of them. And St. Paul was so far from asking any share of them, that he declares that he was *burthensome* to none, that he got his Living by his own Hands, and Preached the Gospel *gratis*, tho if he pleased, he might in Justice demand a Livelihood for it. *They that wait at the Altar Door, are partakers with the Altar; even so*

*Had nothing by  
the Collections.*

so hath the Lord ordained, that they which Preach the Gospel, should Live with the Gospel. But I have used none of these things. Neither have I written these things that it should be so done unto me : For it were better for me to die, than that any Man should make my glorying void. And so again, What is my Reward then ? Verily that when I Preach the Gospel, I may make the Gospel of Christ without Charge, that I abuse not my power in the Gospel, 1 Cor. ix. 14. And again, When I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no Man, 2 Cor. xi. 9. And Acts vii. 14. Ye your selves know, that these Hands have ministred unto my Necessities.

Neither is it true what you say, *Persecuted by Gentiles, as well as by Jews.* that they were in no danger by Preaching to the Gentiles. The reason why so many of the Apostles left the *Jews* to Preach to

the *Gentiles*, was not to avoid Persecution, but not to loose their Time and Preaching among the Stubborn and Hardned *Jews*, who undervalued their Doctrine, and trampled upon the Holy Things. Nay the Apostles were so far from being willing upon this account to go to Preach among the *Gentiles*, that they were brought with great Reluctancy to leave the Persecuting *Jews* to Preach to the *Heathens*. And as for Persecution

cution they had as large a share of it in the *Heathen Countries*, as in *Judaea* itself. The Epistles which the Apostles wrote to comfort the *Gentile Believers* under their Persecutions, and to exhort them courageously to undergo their Sufferings, do clearly demonstrate that they were Persecuted as well by those of their own Country, as by the *Jews*. For St. Paul writes to the *Thessalonians*, *Ye have also suffered like things of your own Countrymen, as ye have of the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus*, 1 Thess. ii. 14. And in the other Epistles to the *Gentile Converts*, there are many Exhortations to Constancy in their Tribulations they underwent from the *Heathens* in those Places where the *Jews* could not hurt them.

But I see no reason in the World why you should say, that the Apostles did not Preach against the Heathen Idolatry; for their bare Teaching the Principles of the *Christian Religion*, is a manifest Confutation of the Worship of Idols. This was the first step which was made towards Christianity, as the Apostle says, 1 Thess. i. 9. *That you being turned from Idols, might serve the Living God*. Paul and *Barabas* at *Lystra*, tell the People, *That they Preach unto them, that they should turn from Vanities, or Idols, unto the Living God*,

*Preached against the Heathen Idolatry.*

Acts 14. 15. And St. Paul at Athens shews them the Vanity of Idol Worship from a Saying of the Poet *Aratus*. And 'twas his Preaching against this, that made *Demetrius* the Silversmith, and the Superstitious Multitude at *Ephesus*, in such a Rage with him, Acts 19. To which, if you add all the many Exhortations against Idolatry in every Page of the Apostolick Epistles, a Man can hardly be thought to have look'd into the New Testament, who does deny this Truth.

*False Brethren not Informers.*

And 'tis a great sign you are not sufficiently conversant in your Bible; that you take those *False Brethren* sometimes spoken of, for Informers against the *Christians*, for their condemning Idolatry. For those *False Brethren* were those who would persuade the *Gentiles* to take upon them the troublesome Ceremonies of the *Mosaical Law*; and those who would pretend to be *Jews* to avoid Persecution, which lay only upon the *Christians*, which you will be sufficiently satisfied of, if you read the 2d and 4th Chapters of the Epistle to the *Galatians*.

*What St. Paul said to the Pharisees no Prevarication.*

As for the Evasion and Prevarication which you tax St. Paul with, the Charge is very unjust. For St. Paul did nothing blame worthy

thy in this. If he had denied himself to be a *Christian*, it had been something. But he only said he was judged for the Resurrection of the Dead, which was the most principal Doctrine of the *Christian* Religion. And indeed I do not see what more proper Argument he could use to convince the *Pharisees* of their fault in persecuting the *Christians*, than to shew that *they* themselves did hold one of the prime Doctrines of their Faith. You cannot think that St. *Paul* by this should make himself no *Christian*, he was too well known among them; for his deserting their Interest, to make this pass upon them. I believe he declined their Malice and Rage against him at that time, by declaring this Doctrine of Christianity before them, which set his Enemies upon an eager Dispute, and engaged the *Pharisees* on his side; which was warrantable enough; for if by the Interest of the *Pharisees* in holding this Point in common with them, he could make himself Friends, I see no reason why he should decline it.

*Phil.* But supposing the Truth of these Miracles to be pretty well attested, yet the *Popish* ones have as strenuous Vouchers for them too; and yet they are believed by none but the Bigots of that Religion.



*Case of Apostolick and Popish Miracles different.*

*Cred.* There is a great deal of difference between the *Popish* Miracles, and those of Christ and the Apostles. In those times when the *Popish* Miracles were most pretended, and in those Places where they are now chiefly said to be done, Bigotry and Superstition universally prevail. The Miracles are done privately before a few Witnesses whose Interest it is to have them believed, and who have that Power in the Government, that any Man shall be undone, that dares to contradict them. The simple Vulgar take their Priests word for the Truth of them, and the Wiser do not care to run the Risque of a Fine, or the Plagues of the Inquisition, by exposing the Cheat. But all things were just contrary in the Case of the Apostles. They could not divulge the Miracles they were Witnesses to, without incurring the Danger of severe Punishment. The Magistrates of that time did not hinder Men from looking narrowly into them, whether they were Tricks or no, but would have taken it kindly from, and Rewarded any one who could have detected the Fraud. And if there had been any ; some prying officious Body or other, would most certainly have found it out, and discovered it to the Magistrates,

strates ; which would have ruined the Cause of Christianity in the very beginning.

*Phil.* But before I have done with this Head of the *Lives and Actions of Christ and his Apostles*, I must tell you that all this success of Christ and his Apostles was owing to some Whimsical Doctrines of the *Jewish Cabbala*, or *Gematria*, set about after the Captivity ; when the *Jews* got some Notions of a *Messias*, which we never read that they dreamt of before ; because forsooth *Shilo* and *Messias* consisted of Letters which make up the same Numerals ; and when they once got this Notion of a *Messias* in their Head, they would pretend to find him in a hundred other Prophecies. And this was a very agreeable fancy to such a miserable People as the *Jews* were then, to expect a great Deliverer ; which they thought this King *Messias* must needs be. Hence several *Messias*'s were set up and came to nothing. But the People believing Christ to have done a great many Miracles, thought He must be that *Messias*. But his Crucifixion and Death spoil'd all, for they had no hopes of a Deliverer that was dead. But when the Apostles testified he was alive again, their hopes of a Temporal *Messias*, are again assumed, and the Apostles themselves expected

*Oracles of Reason from*  
p. 158. to  
p. 165.

the same, as appears by their last Interrogation, *Lord wilt thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?* And therefore to stop the Mouths of the *Jews*, the first Propagators of Christianity, were forced to say, That after a while Christ was coming to Reign with them in Glory, for a Thousand Years, for otherways they would have doubted of his Messias-ship; but this Millenary Invention of his coming to Reign a Thousand Years in Glory salved all. And this, *Credentius*, I take to be the Ground of the success of Christianity.

*Cred.* But because you should not run away with a great deal of bare Assertion without proof, I would desire you would take notice that you have amassed here several Mistakes together, besides the Blasphemous Consequences you draw from them. For,

- I. It is not true that the Notion of a Messias among the *Jews*, came among them after the Captivity. For the Doctrine of the Messias did obtain through all Ages in that Church. It is the Universal Opinion of the *Jews*, that all the Prophets prophesied of Christ. The Book *Sanedrin* quotes a Saying of R. *Jochanan*, *That all the Prophets prophesied only of the Days of the Messias.*

*Doctrine of  
the Messias  
before the  
Captivity.*

*fiar.* And R. Salomon brings a like Saying of Mar, *That all the Prophets did not prophesie but of the Years of Redemption, and the Days of the Messias.* And Maimonides in Hilcot says, *That he that does not believe in the Messias, and expect his coming, does not only disbelieve the Prophets but the Law, and our Doctor Moses.* For the Law bears Witness of him. And indeed the Doctrine of the Messias more or less expressly, was as old as that Nation; for Abraham the Founder of it, had it revealed to him, *That in his Seed should all the Nations of the Earth be Blessed;* which the Jews took always as a Promise of the Messias, or some great Governour or Benefactor to Mankind; as is plain by that of the Apostle, *To Abraham were the Promises made,* Gal. 3. 16. And so several places in the Psalms are spoke of the Messias, or there is no sense to be made of them, and many other Passages in the other Prophets do evince, that the Notion of a Messias was as common in those Times, as under the Reign of Herod. I cannot say, that all along this Series of Time, this great expected Person was called by the Name of Messias, but these Antient Writers meant the same as the Jews did afterwards by that express Name. Nay, the Name as well as Notion seems to be fully settled, and generally to obtain in Da-

niel's Time, for he mentions the Name of the Messias as a Name *Universally* known, *from the going forth of the Commandment to build Jerusalem unto the Messias the Prince, shall be seven Weeks.* Now if the Messias had not been a Name generally used to express that expected Redeemer, he would have used the same kind of Periphrasis as the other Prophets do.

2. Neither is it true what you  
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 ish Gema-  
 tria. Assert, That the *Jewish* Cabbala, or Gematria gave occasion to the Notion of the Messias. For notwithstanding the pretence of the *Jews*, to entitle their Cabbala to *Adam*, or *Moses*, or *Esdra*s, it seems to be only the Fooleries of Modern *Jews*, of which there is no Trace to be found in Antiquity. And tho two Learned Men *Johannes Picus Mirandula*, and *Reuchlinus*, will have the *Pythagorean* Doctrine of Numbers to proceed from That, yet they bring nothing but bare Conjecture for that Opinion. Nay, 'tis plain, that their *Gematria* is a modern Name made from the Greek *τεμετρια*, and was coyned probably by the *Jews* of *Ægypt*, or *Spain*, in the Barbarous Ages of Christianity, when the word *Geometry* usually signified a cunning mystical Art which no Body understood, and was next to Conjuring.

3. And

3. And again you heap upon this another Mistake, That our Saviour made any Advantage to propagate his Religion by the Jewish Notion of a Temporal Messias ; which is so far from being true, that if once he would have encouraged them in that fond Opinion He might have had five times as many Followers as he had. He told them over and over, that his Kingdom was not of this World. And in the 4th of St. John, when our Saviour preached of several Spiritual and Mystical things in his Kingdom ; the Carnal Jews, who had their Heads filled with other more Worldly Expectations of the Messias, could not believe that our Saviour was He. *From that time many of his Disciples went back, and walked no more with him, John 6. 66.* So that this fond Opinion of the Jews, was so far from furthering, that it very much retarded the Progress of the Gospel ; and if our Saviour had set up for a Temporal Prince, as Mahomet did, he might easily have drawn the whole Nation of the Jews after him. Nay, our Saviour never countenances this Vulgar Notion of the Messias in his Disciples, as appears by his checking the Sons of Zebedee, when they asked for precedency in that Kingdom. And in the Text which you urge,

*when*

*Notion of a  
Temporal  
Messias, did  
not farther  
the Gospel.*



when they ask, *Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?* Our Saviour checks them for an Impertinent Question. *It is not for you to know the Times and the Seasons, which the Father hath put in his own Power.* And immediately rectifies their mistake, telling them as before, that it is not a Temporal, but a Spiritual Kingdom they must expect; not the Power of an Earthly Crown and Scepter, but of the Holy Ghost. *But ye shall receive Power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you.*

4. Nor did the Apostles and their Successors propagate the Notion of *Millenium*, or a Thousand Years Reign of Christ upon Earth in lieu of the former gross Opinion. For there is no Footsteps of such an Opinion in the Apostolick Epistles; and 'tis hard to think that St. Paul in so many Writings to several Churches, where he mentions so many Antient Usages and Customs, and every Doctrine of Christianity, should perfectly omit this material one of the *Millenium*. The Apostles talk of a *Spiritual Body*, and *Spiritual Blessings*, a *Crown of Rejoycing*, and *Righteousness*, and *Life*, and *Glory*, and of a *Heavenly Kingdom*; but not a Tittle of a Temporal Reign of Christ upon Earth. We hear nothing of this Millenary Fancy till Pa-

pias

*pias* his Time, who pretended to be acquainted with some of the Apostolick Men, and wou'd have obtruded a great many odd Opinions upon the Church, among which, this of the *Millenium* was one. And from him *Irenaus*, *Justin Martyr*, and others in the latter end of the second and beginning of the third Century copied it; after which, that Opinion, which was never other than of Private Doctors, seems quite lost till it was revived again by *Apollinaris*. So that this Millenary Doctrine was only the Opinion of some Learned Men for one Age; for other Antient Writers older than *Papias*, as for Instance *Barnabas*, who is brought to countenance the *Millenium*, say nothing of it; all that can be made out of Him, is, that he compares the Age of the World to eight days, whereof six it is to last, and as now then Men are to be judged, and afterward upon the eighth to enter into Glory. So that you see this Millenary Doctrine is above a Hundred Years too Novel, and too private a Doctrine among *Christians* to countenance your Suggestion.

## Of the Doctrines contained in the NEW TESTAMENT.

*Phil.* I am afraid, *Credentius*, we shall hardly have time to run the Doctrines of Christianity all over, I shall only pick out some which I have the most Exception against, and give you my Reasons for it. And the First I shall mention is *Prayer*. For my part, I don't see any ground for this in *Natural Religion* or *Reason*. For why should Men pretend to such a sawcy Familiarity with *God Almighty*, as to presume to direct Him what to do? Certainly it is but *Good Manners* to let God distribute His *Favours* to us as he shall think good, and not confidently to beg of Him whatever comes into our head. The World is Govern'd by a *Wise* and *Settled Providence*, which is not to be alter'd by the *impertinent Petitions* of *Vain Men*, who think their *Condition* would be *better'd* by it. And methinks Christians should be ashamed of their Fondness when they Pray for *Rain* or *Fair Weather*; to think that God should interpose against the *settled Rules* of *Nature*, and so should work a Miracle to send them a *better Crop*. No, God is a *Good* and *Wise Being*, who loves his Creatures, and knows what is best for them;

them ; and therefore the Christian Religion is out, when it Teaches that Men should Pray for God's Blessings, which Men ought only to depend upon, and wait for ; and not to think to weary Him out by *Importunities* to send them. That Advice of *Juvenal* is worth Twenty of your Christian Helps to Devotion.

*si consilium vis,  
Permites ipsis expendere, numinibus quid,  
Conveniat nobis, rebusq; sit utile nostris :  
Nam pro jucundis aptissima quaq; dabunt Dij.  
Carior est illis Homo quam sibi*

Take my Advice ; and think that Humane  
(Good,  
By Wiser Gods is better understood.  
For Pleasure we should only make Request,  
Whil'st kinder Heav'n will give us what is  
(Best.  
Man's Dearer unto Them than to him-  
(self, &c.

Therefore I cannot frame my mind to think, that Men do a Pious Act in Praying to God, and spending their Time so dreamingly in Churches and their Closets, to so little Purpose as many Christians do. And as for *Praises* they are altogether as unreasonable

nable; for who can think that the All-wise Deity should take a pleasure in little Flatteries, and in hearing himself commended; when we look upon it as a Weakness in Humane Nature to do so, and when Wise Men cannot endure it?

*Cred.* Sir, You do not seem sufficiently to have considered the Nature of Prayer and the Christian Religion, by the Judgment you pass upon them.

1. If the generality of good Christians spent their Times of Devotion as sillily as the Heathens, whom *Juvenal* reflects upon, did, in praying for Handsome Wives and Children, great Estates, long Life, &c. there would be some tolerable ground

for this Censure. But our Blessed Saviour in his Institution of Religion, has taught us how to regulate our Prayers. He tells us, we must not perform our Devotions in that Hypocritical way, which was in use among the Pharisaical *Jews*, to fall down upon their Knees in the Corners of the Streets, to be seen of Men. Nor to use those Battologies, or Ingeminations, so frequent among the Heathens, as *Jupiter, Jupiter, Jupiter, bone Jupiter*, an hundred times together, as if the Gods were deaf; or, as the Man in the Comedy said to his Wife, who was full

*Christians  
Prayers bet-  
ter than the  
Heathens.*

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of Thanksgiving for finding her lost Daughter, *Define Deos gratulando obtundere, nisi illos tuo esse ingenio judicas, ut nil credas intelligere nisi idem dictum est centies.* What a Work you make with beating this News into the Ears of the Gods, as if the Gods were like you, to understand nothing but what is told them an hundred times over. These were ridiculous Notions of Prayer, which our Saviour has commanded his Followers to avoid; and moreover not to be positive in their Petitions, but to refer all to the good Pleasure and Wisdom of God, desiring after all, that *his Will be done.*

2. Neither do Christians with Malepertness, or Sauciness put up their Prayers to God, but with that Modesty and Humility which becomes Creatures toward their Creator. 'Tis no want of respect to ask my Sovereign a Request, when he has commanded me to ask him: But God Almighty has commanded us to Pray to him, and to come with boldness to the Throne of Grace; and therefore 'tis our Duty to do so. And whereas you tax our Notion of Prayer with attributing a Weakness to the Deity to be importun'd or praised, I think your Notion does the same much more. For you judge God Almighty to be like an Earthly Prince, that is not to be ad-

No Sauciness to pray to God.



address by every one, by reason of the multiplicity of Affairs of a higher nature, which take up most of his Time, and is not to be disturbed by the Applications of little People, whose Suits are therefore deem'd impertinent. But because there can be no distraction of Thoughts, or straightness of Time in God, we know he is as open and free to receive at all times the Suit of the Meanest of Mankind as the most exalted of the Angels.

3. Neither do Christians in their Prayers to God for Rain, Fair-weather, or any other Benefit, expect that God should miraculously disturb the Powers of Nature. God is the God of Nature as well as of Mankind, and has promised to give us the Fruits of the Earth in their due season, and all other needful things to those that ask him. He sends Rains, and Draughts, and Floods, or Fair-weather, either for the Benefit or Punishment of Mankind. I grant that, in the ordinary Course of Nature, such a Quantity of Water is evaporated every Day from the Sea, which Vapours when they grow so numerous and weighty, that they can no longer be suspended in the Air, fall down upon the Earth in Rains and Showers. But then God Almighty, by his Providence, frequently interposes,

*Prayer for  
Rain not for  
a Miracle.*

interposes, that more of them shall fall in one place than in another, to punish Mankind for their Faults ; and this is a Jurisdiction, which God continually keeps over Nature, for the Government of the World ; or else Nature would be God, and not He, and Men would not have that Dependance upon Him which they ought. Now the Exercise of this Jurisdiction cannot be called properly a Miracle. For a Miracle is a violent Perturbation of the Laws of Nature, a Wonderful and Uncommon superseding of them, as when Fire is made not to Burn, or Iron to Swim in the Water ; but this providential Interposition is a gentle leading and direction of Nature, in a Course not much different from her settled Laws, is ordinary and frequent, and so not generally admired. Nature it self is all originally miraculous, and owing to a Divine Power, but by being frequently visible, is not so surprising ; and this Law of providential Interposition is as much God's Natural Law in Governing the World, as the others are in Preserving it. 'Tis to this Interposition of Divine Providence, that Christians in their Prayers appeal ; and this is more rational and agreeable to the Wisdom and Goodness of God, and the humble Dependance of a Creature, than any other fanciful Schemes

of a Physical Predetermination, or an Atheistical Fatality.

*Christians think not to weary God by Prayer.* 4. Nor do we pray to God to think to weary him out by importunate Sollicitations, to give him knowledge of our Wants, &c. but *we ask* because he has commanded

us, and upon our so doing, has told us *we shall receive*. And there is the same reason, why God should require *Prayer* of us, as he should do any other Moral Duty; because this makes us better Men. The frequent returns of this Duty call us off from the Consideration of Worldly Things, and put us upon the Meditation of the Divine Nature, his Wisdom, Justice and Goodness; that by frequently contemplating them we may imitate those adorable Perfections. And the doing this every Day, will much more influence a Man's Mind, than now and then a little Philosophick Talk about them. This will give Men a firm Reliance upon God's Goodness, which the fluctuating Thoughts of all sort of Infidels, do in vain wish for; will excite in our Souls a new Principle of Grace, as shall enable us to conquer a corrupt Nature, and to despise the World; to love God with the most Ardent Affection, and to fit our selves for another more Spiritual Life.

5. And

5. And you are guilty of another mistake, when you think that we Christians put up our Thanksgivings to God, out of Opinion, that God has a fond liking to hear himself commended by us. This is a wanton way you have gotten of representing Matters odiously, by which false Light you put a Fallacy upon your self, make things at first look ridiculous, and then never examine them. But what intelligent Christian, I pray, had ever this Notion of Praise? We praise God both because he has commanded this Tribute from us, and because it is a Moral Duty and highly reasonable so to do; and not because we think to flatter him by it. If Gratitude be a Duty to God, Praise is so; and, if we are obliged to think of God's Favours, we ought to speak them. For in such cases Words do naturally follow our Thoughts, and when Mens Hearts are enlarged by a deep sense of a Noble Benefit, their Words will speak their inward Joy. And what reason is there that there should not be as great an Indication of our Gratitude towards God, as there is towards Men? Grateful Thoughts alone, transitorily pass off from the Mind, but Words make them stay longer upon it, and help to fix them there. A bare Meditation of God's

*Nor to flatter him by Thanksgiving.*

Benefits is oftentimes cold and flat, whilst a Vocal Praise is always accompanied with Warmth and Vigour, and a Noble Elevation of the Soul. When a Man thinks only of God's Goodness, his Thoughts go no further than himself, but in Oral Thanksgivings we Invite others to an equal Praise, and excite that Gratitude in other Mens Minds, which our Hearts abound with. Ah! dear Friend, never let your ill Principles lead you to run down these Duties of *Prayer* and *Thanksgiving*, which are the only stay of Happiness which *Mankind* has in this *World*; without these he is an Elated Fool in Prosperity, and a miserable Dejected Wretch in Adversity; has no hope of Pardon, and no expectation of Reward: Quit not this Hold whatever you do, and pray to God for his Grace and Favour to enlighten your mind, even whilst you are an Unbeliever; and if to this you joyn your earnest Endeavours to be satisfied in your Doubts, God may give you Grace to believe and practice that Holy Religion; which you now so much despise. But have a care of totally abandoning the Worship of God, for then you can have no pretence to his Favour; and, tho you were willing, I am afraid you will never be able to be a Believer.

III. Part III. *with a Theist.* 245

*Phil.* Your warm Discourse makes me a little serious, and I must needs own that I very much envy the Happiness which Good Christians receive in their Devotions and Dependence upon God; but I have long been used to a more Rational and Philosophick way. However your Arguments seem to carry weight with them, and your Advice is good; and I'll assure you I will give them both a Just Consideration. But in the mean while, I will proceed to some other Duty, which Christianity enjoyns; and which I have exception to.

Now you Christians profess a Vertue, which you call Mortification, thereby pretending to abridge your selves of some very innocent Pleasures. But methinks this is perfect Superstitious Folly. For God Almighty gave us these Good Things to enjoy them, and I think we are Coxcombs if we do not. Indeed we ought not to prosecute our Satisfactions by Injustice, or to purchase our Pleasure, at the Expence of another Man's Grief; but what reason is there, why a Man should not be as happy as he can, when he does no Body any harm? I do not contend, that a Man should become a Beast for Pleasure; but, when God has provided for us like Gentlemen, why should we live like Monks?



*Mortification  
on a reason-  
able Duty.*

*Cred.* You very much mistake the Christian Duty of Mortification, if you think it an unreasonable Injunction. For there is nothing commanded of this nature, in the Gospel, but what is agreeable to the justest Reason: For when we are commanded by our Saviour, in the *Jewish* Phrase, *To pluck out our Eye, and cut off our Hand that offends us*; that is, to tear away from our Souls the most darling Affection which may occasion us to sin; or when the Apostles tells us, 'tis our Duty *to Crucifie the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts*; there is nothing in these Injunctions, but what unprejudiced Reason will agree to. Every one must own, that 'tis our Duty to arrive at as great a Pitch of Vertue as we can, or however to avoid every known Sin; now, without Mortification and Self-denial, to do this is hardly possible. Our Passions are head-strong things, and are not to be governed by only denying them unlawful Enjoyments; if we gratifie them to the height, in all they may innocently enjoy, they will quickly crave what is noxious. A Man that never denies himself an Indifferent thing, when Temptations are strong, knows not how to deny himself a bad one. Therefore all the Parts of Mortification and Self-denial, are very reasonable and

and useful, to make a Habit of Vertue more easie to us, and to arrive to a more exalted degree of it. Do you your self be Judge, if a Man shall not be more perfect in the Duty of Temperance, that is very sparing in the use of Strong Drinks, than one that takes care only to drink them so long, till his Reason be infatuated by them. The first keeps such a wide Distance from Intemperance, that there is no fear of falling into it, but the other walks so near the brink of the Precipice, that a Thousand Accidents may make him miscarry. Is not a Man farther removed from the Sin of Gluttony, less liable to impure Thoughts, and better qualified for serious Study, Religious Exercises and Devotion, that Eats always sparingly and frequently intermits his ordinary Meals, than one that eats every Day to Repletion? Is not a Man less liable to fall into unlawful Anger, that checks this Passion upon the justest occasions, that accustoms himself to a calm and sober way of Conversation, and has learn'd to bear the greatest Indignities with a Spirit of Meekness; than one that suffers his mind to be ruffled with this Passion, upon every little petty Offence? Nay, even Corporal Severities, if they be not cruel or fanciful, or done with a design of satisfaction, or superstitiously, may have their

use to wean and deter Men from Sin, and strengthen them in a Habit of Vertue. But more of the Reasonableness and Use of this Vertue you may see in Practical Treatises. *Vid. Dr. Scott's Christian Life, Part III. Dr. Nicholls's Essay of the Contempt of the World, Chap. III. Sect. 6.*

*Phil.* Another fault I find with the Christian Religion, is for forbidding Polygamy or Concubinage. For what reason is there that this Religion should deny Mankind that Right, which they claimed in the Patriarchal Times, and under the Law? If it was unlawful or inconvenient then, why did God allow it? Or if he saw any inconvenience in it in latter Times, he might as well have foreseen it many Ages before. So that 'tis plain, by God's allowing it to the Patriarchs, and by the general Practice of the World, Mankind has a Right to this Privilege; and therefore 'tis an Unjust Usurpation upon their Liberties, in your new Religion, to abridge them of it. Besides, Nature it self condemns this Prohibition, by making Men more Prolifick than Women; for a Man may have an Hundred, but a Woman can seldom have above a dozen Children; a Woman is sterile before she is Fifty Years old, whilst Men retain their fecundity oftentimes, to the extremity of Old Age;

to

to say nothing of the speedy Decay of the *Beauty and Gracefulness* of the other Sex in respect of ours, by which Nature does, as it were, shew, That it is time they should be laid aside, when they become unagreeable. Therefore, for a Man to be clogged his whole Life time to *one Woman*, upon these extraordinary Disparities, is *unreasonable*; but, if your *Christian Legislators* would suffer us to manage Matters, we would contrive a Way to make Matrimony a very pleasant Thing, to Increase the Breed of Mankind, and so to Stock the World bravely.

*Cred.* Pray, good *Philologus*, let us have no more of this *Lewd Reasoning*, which is fit only for the *Rakes of the Town*, and which I thought you had been too sober to have mention'd. As for your Argument for *Polygamy*, drawn from Polygamy not lawful from the Practice of the Patriarchal Ages of the World, I think that is no Argument for us now. If it was permitted after the Flood, for the speedy Peopling the World then, the same Reason will not hold now when 'tis better Stock'd. And then Nature must abound most with Females for this very Purpose; the contrary of which we rather find now. It was permitted to Abraham

*ham* and his Posterity upon good grounds, because all their *Neighbouring Nations*, they were seated among, us'd it; and the *Jews* would have been apt to have *revolted* to the *Idolatrous Religion* of their *Neighbours*, when they found they had a greater *Indulgence* than they enjoy'd. But the case was altered in our *Saviour's Time*, *Polygamy* and *Concubinage* began to grow more out of Fashion than formerly, *In most parts of the World*, by the prevailing of the *Romans*, who did not use them,; and His *Religion* being to be planted chiefly within the *Confines* of that Empire, it was a more easie *Injunction* to ordain single Marriage, than in *Abraham's* or *Moses* his Time, when *Polygamy* was almost universal.

2. Neither is it any Argument  
Nor from the Practice of the Barbarous. that *Polygamy* is grounded upon the Law of Nature, because many *Barbarous Nations* do at this Day, and have in all Ages Practiced it. For such Nations live in a number of *cruel unnatural Customs*, which Nature could never direct them, to such as Eating Man's Flesh, and even that of their own Children, Publick Com-mixtures, Incests and the like.

3. Our

3. Our Saviour Christ Taught a Religion of the most Spiritual Nature, that was ever known in the World, which oblig'd Men not only to avoid all gross Sins, but to curb all unruly and extravagant Appetites. And therefore it was but reasonable, that Men should not be allowed, under this pure Institution, in the intemperate Excesses of a Vagrant Love, which Polygamy or Concubinage would Tempt Men to. Such Luxuries would be inconsistent with that Purity of Mind, which the Gospel requires, and those Fleshly Delights would be too great an Impediment, of that Heavenly mindedness which we Christians are obliged to have.

*Forbid by Christianity, because too Carnal.*

4. And though there may be something in Polygamy or Concubinage, which may Gratify a Sensual Man, yet they want the Satisfaction, Tendernesses, and Endearments of single Marriage. Love, when it is so divided, is like a River cut into several Channels, it loses it self when it runs into so many Streams. For there is rarely any True Love & Sincere Affection to be found among those People or Countries where these are Practiced; for there they generally matter no more the Death of one of their Wives or Concubines, than of one of their Horses. But if you

*More Comfort in single Marriage.*



you will take the Opinion of the Ancient *Love-Poets*, who did not care to have their Liberty in this matter too much abridged, they declare it for single Marriage, as to the point of Comfort and Satisfaction, in opposit both to *Divorce* and *Concubinage*.

HORACE says :

*Felices ter & amplius,*  
*Hor lib. 1. Quos irrupta tenet copula : nec malis*  
*Car. 13. Divulsos querimonij*  
*Suprema citius solvet amor die.*

Thrice Happy is that Pair, and more than so,  
 Whom undissolved Nuptials tie ;  
 In Age and Peace who to the Grave do go,  
 And never part before they Die.

And thus PROPERTIUS, Lib. 1.  
 Eleg. 15.

*Exemplo junctæ tibi sint*  
*in amore Columbæ,*  
*Masculus, & totum*  
*Femina Conjugium.*

Take

Take for Example of your Love,  
The Mating of the Faithful Dove ;  
In couples they together Cooe,  
And all the Wedlock is in Two.

5. Neither is it True what you say, *that Mens Affections wear off as the maturer Age of their Wives comes on, and that they are least agreeable to them then.* Indeed, *Affections of the Married do not naturally wear off by Age.* there is no Account to be given for the Lustful Fancies of Lewd Men ; but generally speaking Men are naturally most pleased with a Parity of Age ; the Soberness and Discretion, and decent Comeliness of those latter Years, in Women, are more pleasing to Men of a proportionate Age, than the finer Charms of a *Blooming Beauty*. Nay, *Ovid* himself, who must be supposed to understand these matters well enough, before he grew in Years, declares for the *senior ætas*, the Maturer Age of at least *Thirty Five*, *Quæ cito post septem lustra venire solet.*

And these, perhaps, your *Gentlemen* would begin to reckon among your *Unagreeables*. But, in short, if Men lead *Good and Sober Lives*, and behave themselves with that *Tenderness and Affection* which they ought

ought to do in a Conjugal State, their *Love* would not decline with their *Tears*, but they would carry on a warmth of Affection even to the Extremities of Old Age. But as for the Affections of Lewd Men, 'tis not Youth or Beauty, or any thing else, can Fix them ; for we often find, that they slight and despise their Vertuous and most Agreeable Consorts, for the sake of Filthy and, oftentimes, Unhandsome Prostitutes.

6. Neither is your Argument for *Polygamy* drawn from the speedier Decay of *Feminine Beauty*, and their Sterility before that of Men, any ways concluding.

For in most Marriages the Men are, or ought to be, so much Superior in Age to the Women, as will make up this Disproportion, so that they may grow Old together by equal degrees of Declension. That Women grow Sterile sooner than Men, is no Argument that Nature design'd the Woman should be dismissed, or another Wife taken in ; for this may be a thing purely accidental in Nature, and no design of it ; but owing to the more Numerous Causes of Feminine than Masculine Sterility. But what reason is there that a Faithful and Fruitful Wife should be cast off for another, when she has already  
born

born her Husband more Children than he perhaps can well maintain and provide for? And when Heaven has given her a *Manumission* from the Pains and Dangers of Child-Birth, why should she be abridged then of any Comforts of Matrimony, which the Man has enjoy'd his whole time without Trouble?

7. But the slavery of the *Wives* and the constant Family Quarrels where *Polygamy* is practiced, are unanswerable Arguments against the Use of it. There is a sort of Equality in Marriage, and the Man is as much beholding to the Woman as the Woman to the Man. But where *Polygamy* is practiced, the Wife has no Right at all, the whole set of Wives are all their Husbands Slaves, they are Encourged and Discountenanced, Bedded or Turned Out, according to his Despotick Will and Pleasure. Which is such a perfect Enslaving one half of God's Creation, that it can never be esteemed a Natural Law, or Proceeding from the Establishment of a Wise and Just God. Or if we look into the Quarrels and Animosities among the Mothers and Children in the Families of *Turkey*, to observe their constant Scolding and Fighting, the

rend-

*Objection against Polygamy from the slavery of such Wives.*

rending and tearing away their Husband's Goods for their respective Children, their Jealousies, Stabbings and Poisonings ; if we have any Consideration, we must needs highly applaud the Institution of single Marriage only by the Christian Religion, by which Families are freed from these miserable Fewds and Distractions.

*From the Equality of Male and Females.*

8. But lastly, 'tis to me a Demonstration, that Polygamy has no ground in Nature, nor does it at all contribute to the Peopling the World, but rather hinders it. If Nature designed Polygamy, she would have made three or four Women for one Man ; but Experience shews, that more Males are Born than Females. In all Accounts of the Births of Children, there is one in twenty born more of Boys than Girls ; which seems to be a prudent design of Nature for a Supply, for the Consumption of Men in the Wars, and other difficult Labours they are exposed to. Therefore the number of *Marriageable Men* and *Women* are equal ; so that if one *Man* was allow'd to have four Wives, there must three other Men go without any Wife at all ; which would be very great Injustice to be forced to. Neither would this contribute to the Peopling of the World, for if all the

Men

Men and Women in the World were joyned in single *Marriage*, they would have more Children, than if they were so sorted, that sometimes one *Man* should have half a dozen *Wives*, and a great many none at all. For it is not to be doubted but that six *Men* and six *Women*, shall generally speaking, have more Children than one *Man* and six *Woman*. Therefore I say that seeing there are but an equal number of *Men* and *Women* in the World, Polygamy has no ground in Nature, nor would the World be better Peopled if it were allow'd. And the same Reason holds against Plurality of *Husbands*, or Community of *Wives*, or any other way of Concubinage or Matrimony, besides single *Marriage*, which Nature directs to solely, by the Equality of *Males* or *Females*. And therefore I very much wonder at the unwary Assertion of a late Ingenious Writer, \* to say that a Community of *Women* limited by the *Civil Power*, is not against the *Law Natural*, but that it is only the *Business* of *Revealed Religion* to fix and determine it.

*Mr. Beccón-  
sal's Ground  
and Foundation  
of Nat. Relig.  
P. 394*

*Phil.* The next *Doctrine of Christianity* I except against is, its *not allowing Divorce* upon Desparity of Temper, and Intolerableness of Conversation. There are some

S

*Wives*



Wives of that Hellish Disposition, that a Man had better be coupled for Life with an *Succubus*, or She-devil ; their intolerable Pevishness, Clamorous and Spightful Behaviour, makes a Man's Life a sort of Damnation, and occasions several to venture it in another World, to get rid of it here. But what reason is there that a Man should be forced his whole Life-time, to abide this Misfortune, without redress ? Here was an Errour committed in the very fundamental Contract of Matrimony, and therefore ought in all Equity to be redrest : A Man thought of Marrying a Sweet-disposition'd Peaceable Wife, and not such an Infernal Shrew ; he reckoned in his Bargain to have a *Meet Help*, as you call it, and not a Plague for Life. But if Adultery be a sufficient reason for Divorce, why not Intolerableness of Conversation ? For I had a thousand times rather be Married to a Good-natur'd Whore, than such an Eternal Scold.

*Cred.* Pray, Sir, let us have no more of this Declamation. For if you seriously consider the case, you must needs allow of our Saviour's Determination, that Divorce is not to be allowed upon Unagreeableness of Temper. As you have stated the Case, you lay all the Blame on the

Womans

*Unreasonable-  
ness of Arbitrary  
Divorces.*

Womans side ; but, upon view, there might  
 be as many Women likewise found, who  
 would be as glad of a Divorce, upon ac-  
 count of intolerable Husbands. And I be-  
 lieve most of your Friends, who complain  
 so much of this Restraint, by their Lewdness  
 and Ill-treatment of their Wives, have  
 brought them to that discontented Humour.  
 'Tis true, there is frequently very uncomfor-  
 table Living together, of some in a *Married*  
*State*, either through the Fault of Husband  
 or Wife, or both ; but why can't these faults  
 be altered without disannulling the *Marri-*  
*age* ? If a Man or a Woman be of an Angry,  
 Fretful, or Positive Temper, they must sub-  
 due their Nature and rectifie these ill Habits,  
 and bear with one another's Failures, and  
 then they may live as comfortably together,  
 as other People : But as long as they give  
 the Reins to these exorbitant Passions, they  
 may *Divorce* and *Marry*, and *Divorce* again,  
 till *Doomsday*, and live never the more hap-  
 py for it. But granting that there are some  
*Married* together, of such a Disparity of  
 Temper, that they can never live happy ; it  
 is better they should suffer a little, than the  
 World to be put in Distraction by a Licence  
 of Divorce, upon pretence of this. The  
 best Laws that are in the World happen ac-  
 cidentally sometimes to lie hard upon some,

and yet so universal are their Benefit, that no reasonable Man would desire the Repeal of them, because some few Men may chance to suffer by them. Would you be content, that the Nation should suffer all the Miseries, which Arbitrary Divorces would bring, only to have some of your Friends rid of Cross Wives? How many wicked Pretences would there be to cast off Honest and Vertuous Wives, when the Vitious Husbands had seen some body else they liked better? Divorces, upon some special Reasons, were allow'd to the *Jews*; but then, as appears by their *Rabbies*, they were encouraged by this to take any occasion to do it. *Maimonides* allows it a just Cause for Divorce, *that the Wife is not Well-bred*, others *that she does not Salt or Dress her Husband's Meat well*; and *R. Akiba* says the Cause is just, *If he can Marry a Woman handsomer than his Wife, because it is said, if she does not find favour in his Eyes*. And if Divorces should once come to be tolerated, such sort of Casuists as these, would be mightily in request. But put the case home to your self: If you had a Civil Vertuous Daughter Married to a Lewd Gentleman, would you be willing, that when he had given her all the Provocations imaginable to provoke her Passion, by an alienating of his Affections and Conversation with Lewd Women,

Women, I say, would you be willing that he should have the Power of branding her with the Name of an Untameable Shrew, and turning her Home again. If this was tolerated, it would bring an unknown Train of Wickedness into the World, in an Age which is but too Wicked already. Husbands would throw off their Wives for their Waiting-Women, Wives would often leave their Antienter Husbands for Young Spruce Gallants, the Children of the Divorced Wife would often be turned out with their Mother, or Disinherited of their Lawful Inheritance, to gratifie the New Spouse ; Law-Suits would continually arise among the different Children for their share of the Patrimony, or when they were Young, would be cruelly abused by the latter Wife, or by their Father, who would be influenced by her ; and the best Families, in little time, would be reduced to Beggary, by Contentions, or a multitude of Children. And these are such miserable Inconveniences ; that a little Uncomfortable Living with a Froward Wife, is much rather to be chosen, than to be forced to undergo them. Therefore you Unbelievers have no reason to find fault with this Injunction, or Determination of our Blessed Saviour in this Case ; but have rather great reason to admire his Wisdom in for-

bidding a Custom, which is so much to the Bane of the Commonwealth, and of Humane Society.

*Phil.* Another Objection I have against the Doctrinal part of Christianity is, because it teaches Meekness and Humility; which, in my mind, are Qualifications for a Sheep, and not for a *Man*. These are Dependences of *Mind*, for a *Man's*

*Spinos. Op. Postuma. p. 205.* not being so considerable as he ought to be; but then he ought to arrive to that Pitch, and not

to be creeping in a lower Class of Vertue, when he ought to have advanced himself to an higher. And therefore I like *Matchia-vel's* Notion very well, who says the *Christian Religion* is not a proper Religion for a Brave Prince, for if it have any influence upon him, it will infect his Soul with such a poor Pusillanimity, as will render him unfit for any Brave or Glorious Actions. These are Vertues unheard of by the *Greeks* and *Romans*, who studied these Matters the best; their Philosophers read Noble Lectures upon Magnanimity, and a Generousness of Soul; but never thought of two such Narrow-spirited Habits, as *Meekness* and *Humility*.

*Cred.*

*Cred.* I very much wonder you should go about to undervalue and expose that Modest and Humble Temper of *Mind*, which our Religion recommends under the Names of *Meekness* and *Humility*; I should think you should rather look upon it as the great Glory of our Saviour's Institution, to recommend a Vertue, which is so useful to Society, and yet the most Learned Sages of the World have passed it over unregarded in their Ethicks. The *Heathen Philosophers* make a mighty stir with their *Magnanimity* or *Bravery of Soul*, and yet all this at the bottom, is nothing but Unregenerate Pride. A *Man* perhaps had enjoy'd the Honour of a Considerable Victory, was Born in the famous City of *Athens*, had studied some Years in the *Porch* or *Academy*, had gotten some Fallacies together, to prove that Nothing could be made out of Nothing, that there could be no *Motion*, that a *Wise Man* was happy in Pain, or that Vertue was an Animal, &c. and the *Vain Man* was so Elated with one or two of these Trifles, that he despised all the World besides, as Barbarous Fools, and an Unthinking *Mobb*. Others laid down for themselves some Principles of Honour, which were in repute with the Common People, and they chose closely to

*Humility  
and Meek-  
ness Moral  
Vertues.*



follow these, because they found they should be applauded for it, and mightily admired. Now this sort of Pride they gave a good Name to, and stiled *Magnanimity* or *Greatness of Soul*, and made this pass too for another Venerable Quality amongst the People, who were so well managed as to admire the Philosophers the more, for their despising them. But I wonder you should so abandon your Reason, as to find fault with our *Christian Humility*, and extol this *Philosophick Pride* for a famous Vertue. Do you your self be Judge: Which is the most commendable Quality, for a *Man* humbly to acknowledge his own Imperfections and Failures, and to own how far he falls short of the *Measures* of the exactest Vertue, or arrogantly to pretend that he is arrived to a pitch of Vertue, by which he is equal to the *Gods*? Is it not more modest and reasonable to attribute the Success of our best *Actions* to the *Grace of God*; than to ascribe it to I know not what Infallible Rules of Vertue, and to pretend we are a *sort of Gods* to our selves? What *reason* was there that *those Old Sages* should be so *Elated* upon their Natural Stock of Parts, upon the Advantage of their *Education*, and their *Philosophick Studies*? Is not a *Christian* much the better *Man*, who tho he stands possessed of these *Qualifications*,  
does

does reflect no Glory upon himself for them, but humbly considers that these are all the Gift of a *Gracious God*, to whom all the Praise of them belongs? There is no way to excuse the *Philosophers* for their *Arrogant Contempt* of the *Common People*, because they wanted the Education they enjoy'd; and for their refusing them the Knowledge of those *Virtuous Rules* they kept under Lock and Key among themselves. How much more is the *Christian Religion* to be admired that teaches an Humility, to be kind and obliging to all, and to look upon the whole Race of Mankind, as our *Fellow Creatures* and *Brethren*; to despise *no one's Imperfections*, when we consider *our own*; to undervalue *none* for their Wants and Failures, but rather to pity them, and when 'tis in our power to relieve them; to think *no Body* fit to be despised, that God has given an *Immortal Soul* to, and that we can never be too Great to do good to our *Fellow Creatures*, who have received all that we have from an *Infinite God*. But if our Religion instead of *Humility* taught, your *Heathen Magnanimity*, what a conceited World should we in a little while see? Tho Men are daily taught to have as humble and mean thoughts as they can of themselves, yet notwithstanding this, many will be meddling with Mat-  
ters

ters out of their Sphere, and neglect their *Profession* to be Menders of *Church* and *State*; but if all *Men* should once get in their Heads your *Notion* of *Philosophical Bravery* or *Magnanimity*, we should have all mean People despise their Callings, and leave the Fields and their Shops, to turn *Philosophers*, *Statesmen*, and *Politicians*.

Spinozas Argument against Christianity answered.

But is it a Fault to be humble, because *Humility* is a Sorrow for not having that just *Perfection* a Man should have?

If it be a Vertue to desire to be as good as one can, it is some degree of Vertue to be sorry one is no better. But your *Philosopher Spinoza* mistakes the matter, when he makes *Humility* a *Sorrow of Mind* for want of that *Vertuous Perfection* we would have: This is properly that *Passion of the Mind* we generally call *Æmulation*. But *Humility* is quite another thing, it is a *fixt Temper of Mind*, whereby, after a serious Consideration of *Humane Imperfection* and the *Divine Bounty*, we attribute no *Glory* to our selves for any thing valuable we possess, nor undervalue others for want of them. And if by *God's Grace* the whole *World* was brought to this *Christian Temper*, we should find that *Mankind* would be more peaceable and Good, more Kind and Charitable, than when

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Part III. with a Theist. 267

when they are lead by their *own Passions*, nay than if they were instructed by the Swag-gering Principle of your *Philosophick Mag-nanimity*.

Nor is there any weight in *And Matchia-vel's* your *Matchiavellian Reason* ;

That a good *Christian* can't be a Brave Prince.

It is a *horrible Reflexion* upon the *Royal Dig-nity*, to think that it cannot be discharged by an *Honest Man*. For *Christianity* really

forbids nothing, but what is wicked. In-deed if Cruelty and Oppression, Fraud and

Perfidiousness, if Plundering and Ravaging the *Countries of Harmless Neighbours*, and an

Insatiable desire of *Conquest* at the expence of the *Blood of ones dearest Friends*, do

qualifie a *Man* to be a Brave Prince, then I confess the true *Christian Religion* will never

assist any one with these Methods: But if it be any Ingredient of the Character of a

Brave Prince, to cherish and defend his own Subjects, and to do no injustice to his Neigh-bours ; to keep his Word Inviolable, and

his Oaths Sacred, to encourage Vertue and Goodness, and to despise Falshood and

Treachery ; then our *Holy Religion*, if sin-cerely practiced, will make the Noblest

Prince ; and may God *Almighty* of his Mercy grant that all, whose Lot it is to sit upon our

*English Throne*, may be the *Most Christian*

*Kings*

*Kings*, in this Sense. As for the *good Government of a Nation in time of Peace*, I think there is no doubt to be made, but that a *Wise Prince of a good Conscience*, is the best qualified ; and, if he has equal Courage, he is the same in time of War ; for Instances have not been wanting in History of Princes, such as *Constantine and Charles the Great*, who were *Religious Christians and Brave Warriours*.

*Phil.* Next I have to object against the *Doctrine of Christianity*, for its commanding Men to forgive Injuries after such a simple rate, as would expose Men, if they practised it, to all the Calumny in the World.

Who can ever be brought to think that a Man having received a Blow on one Cheek should be obliged to offer the other ? This would be to invite one Injury

upon the back of another, and to make Innocent Men *Suffer*, only to make Ill-natur'd People Sport. But to be obliged to love our Enemies, is a thing naturally impossible to do ; for God has naturally implanted in Men Passions of Anger and Revenge, which are excited in them upon Injuries received, and therefore it is impossible to love Them that Nature inclines and disposes us to hate.

*Uriel Acoftæ  
Exemplar.  
Hum. Vitæ.  
ed. per Limb.  
P. 352.*

*Cred.*

*Cred.* You now find fault with the most *Glorious Morality*, which ever was preached in the World, and which is laid out by the *Wisdom of God*, for the greatest Peace and Quiet of Mankind, and is agreeable to the exactest Rules of Unprejudiced Reason. As for the Instance of *our Saviour* in the Left and Right Cheek, that is only a Proverbial Saying, which he uses as an illustration of what he Preached. He was endeavouring to amend in the *Jews* that *Vindictive Humour* which was so common among them, and which the Old Law did in some measure connive at, by allowing them the Law of Retaliation, *an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth*; but *our Saviour* is for prohibiting all sort of Revenge tho never so Specious and Legal; and therefore tells them, that they should be so far from demanding an Eye for an Eye, or a Blow for a Blow, that they should rather turn the Right Cheek to him that smote the Left. That is, you *Christians* ought to take no manner of Revenge, and tho your suffering patiently one Affront may produce another, yet choose rather to suffer that too, than to retain Malice or Revenge in your Minds.

*Turning the  
Cheek Me-  
taphorical.*

Neither



*To forgive  
Injuries rea-  
sonable.*

Neither is it at all unreasonable to bear and forgive Injuries, but is really agreeable to the highest Wisdom and Discretion. What can be more reasonable, than for one Man patiently to bear an Offence from another, who is conscious to himself of having so often provoked a Merciful God, who continues still, to bear with him? What more reasonable to suffer these from other Men, when we our selves cannot live without giving Offences to them? It is highly reasonable to bear with Injuries, and readily to forgive them, if it were only to be rid of those *Tormenting Passions*, which accompany a State of Enmity; and to be freed from the Study of Malice and Revenge, which do so knaw Mens Souls and prey upon their Vitals. If a Man wisely consults his own Interest, he will never provoke others to continue his Enemies still, by returning an Injury; but will rather, by doing good to them, regain their Friendship, which will be much more advantageous and much more grateful to a Wise Man, than to have them continue in their Enmity.

And lastly, Is it not a greater sign of Wisdom for a Man to slight Affronts so often, that Men shall be a weary of giving them, when they find he takes so little notice of them;

them; than by a *Passionate Cognizance* or *Retaliation*, to provoke Men to give them more, for the satisfaction of seeing him so much disturbed at them?

But why is it impossible to love our Enemies? Altho in a Corrupt Nature we find some tendency towards revenging an Injury, yet it is in the *Power of Grace and Religion* to correct these outrageous Desires. If it be reasonable to forgive Injuries and bear Affronts, it is as reasonable to love our Enemies for the same Arguments; and if it be reasonable to love our Enemies, then our *Revealed Religion* which teaches this, is better than the *Natural one*, which directs to hate our Enemies, upon account of several Tendencies of Nature towards it. But it is the saying only of Unregenerate Men, that it is impossible to love our Enemies, and true *Christians* know to the contrary. It is indeed impossible as well as unreasonable, to love an Enemy as well as a dear Friend; but Men may very possibly, and do very ordinarily love their Enemies so as to wish them no harm, bear them no ill will, and to do them any Kindness which lies in their power, as readily as if they never had been offended by them. And perhaps this naturally is impossible to do, because there is not force enough in pure Nature

Nature or Reason to overcome this natural *Propension to Revenge*. But when a Man's *honest Resolutions* are strengthened by the Grace of God, and when God's *Promises* on one hand, and His *Threatenings* on the other, inforce this *Duty*, when a Man considers, that without *loving Enemies* he can have no hopes to avoid Hell or obtain Heaven, he may then, without the greatest Difficulty, subdue this Natural *Propension to Revenge*, which our *Saviour* has commanded us to do. As for this Man, from whom you borrow this Argument of the *Impossibility of loving Enemies*, he was a sower peevish *Athiest*, who had Embraced and Renounced the *Jewish Religion* two or three times over, and lived for a great while miserably under a *Jewish Excommunication* at *Amsterdam*, and when he was received again, was most *horribly Beaten* in the *Jewish Synagogue*; now this sad Unregenerate Wretch, having no hopes of *Immortality*, could not subdue his Nature so as to *Forgive his Enemies*, but was resolved to Murder his Nephew, who was the *Informers*, of his *Atheistical Principles*, and his *Contempt* of the *Mosaical Law*, to the *Synagogue*; and therefore in this *Treatise*, which he calls *Exemplar Humanae Vitæ*, he denies the Possibility of it. He had this *Murderous Design*, I say, in his head, when  
he

he wrote this little Tract ; for he shot off a Gun at his Nephew, out of a Window, as he passed by, but missing him, and fearing Detection, soon afterwards shot himself, leaving behind him this Treatise, called, *Exemplar Humanae Vitæ*, which came first into *Episcopius's*, and afterwards into *Monf. Limborch's* hands, who first Publish'd it with an Answer to it.

*Phil.* But why does the *Christian Religion* forbid Law Suits? And why do the *Professors* of it so little Practice its *Commands*? And what reason is there that if a Man sue another at Law, and take away his Coat, he should let him take his Cloak also? Certainly there is no reason why I should sacrifice the Welfare of my self and Family to the Injustice of every impudent Oppressor. If he will do Unrighteous Things, he must take what follows; and as long as the Law will guard us from such Oppression, a Man is a Fool that will lye under it.

*Cred.* You mistake the Nature of our Saviour's Precept, if you think that it Destroys all Courts of Judicature; for our Saviour quietly lived under the Jewish Judicial Law, and declares He came not to Destroy the Law, but to Fulfill; Whatever was grounded upon Natural and Morral Rules of Justice and Charity,

*Christ did not absolutely forbid Law Suits*

riety, He retain'd in His New Institution, or Improved it ; and Abolished nothing but what was Ceremonial or Typical, or indulged to the Carnal Affections of the Jews. And St. Paul declares, *That the Secular Powers are ordained of God, That the Magistrate is the Minister of God, That he beareth not the Sword in vain* : And he does not find fault that the Christians do at all go to Law, but that they went to Law in the Heathen Courts, 1 Cor. vi. 1. *Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to Law before the Unjust, and not before the Saints ? Do you not know that the Saints shall Judge the World ? And if the World shall be Judged by you, are you unworthy to Judge the smallest matters ?* Therefore, these Words of our Saviour's must be taken, as spoken in a Proverbial way ; that we ought not to be forward to go to Law with our Neighbours upon every little petty Offence, but rather to bear a considerable Detriment, as the loss of a Cloak, than to engage our selves in those Contests, in which it is very difficult to demean our selves without breach of Christian Charity. But when the loss is very grievous or considerable, and which affects the Welfare of our Families, our Saviour does not at all forbid that we may Right our selves by the ordinary course of Legal Justice ; there being no reason that we  
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and our Children should suffer, perhaps the greatest Extremeties, rather than a griping Oppressor should be a little troubled.

*Phil.* There is another Christian Vertue, much talked of, which you call *Repentance*; but this is so far from a Vertue, that it is a *poor wretched Passion*, a sad Grief and *Despondency of Mind*, which a Wise Man who is governed by reason, cannot fall under. He that Repents of an Action is doubly miserable, he first suffers himself to be overcome by an Evil Desire, and then again by a Dejected Sorrow. And truly nothing exposed Christianity more to the Heathen World than this Doctrine of Repentance, which occasions Celsus to say: To the Heathen Sacrifices, the Crier calls to come, whosoever is pure and wise, and free from Evil: But whom do the Christians call? Whosoever is a sinner, whosoever is silly, whosoever is a child, him the Kingdom of Heaven shall receive. You call your selves sinners, under which name are understood all sorts of unjust Persons, Thieves, Poisoners, the Sacrilegious, House-breakers, and Robbers of Tombs. Now if one was to raise a company of Thieves, one could not be better fitted than with such people as these. And is it not odd to have a Religion made up of such sort of Men, that were wicked at first, and are always Sinning,

Spinof. Op.  
post. p. 296.



and Repenting afterwards, or as a *Quaker* has expressed it, from Sixteen to Sixty; are, saying, *We have erred and strayed like lost Sheep*, and go no farther. Men should take care to establish in themselves a settled Habit of Virtue, and not chequer out their Lives, as most of you Christians do, with half Saint and half Sinner; if they find, upon just Reasoning, that they go on in a *wrong course of life*; they ought, like Wise Men, without any more to do, to turn into the *right*, but I cannot imagine what use there is of a whining Repentance, or Maudlin Devotion.

*Cred.* We can easily grant *Spi-*  
*Repentance, I say,* without the pains of his  
*not only for* *Propositions* and *Corollaries*, that  
*row.* the bare sorrow of Repentance is  
 a Passion and not a Virtue; but Repentance  
 considered in its full extent, as it takes in all  
 the Acts, which are requisite to this Grace, is  
 (I say) a Divine Grace, or Christian Virtue.  
 If it be virtuous to be willing to continue bad,  
 then it is some degree of Virtue to be willing  
 to be good. If it be a Sin to be glad of do-  
 ing ill, it is Vertuous to be sorry for hav-  
 ing done it. If it be Wicked, carelessly to  
 continue out of God's Favour, it is good ear-  
 nestly to endeavour to be reconciled to him;  
 and if it be Bad to continue in our Sins, 'tis  
 better to forsake them. Therefore, *Repen-*  
*tance,*

tance; in which we do all this, is truly and properly a Vertue; Repentance is not, as your *Author* would make the *World* believe, a bare sorrow for Sin, but a steadfast *Resolution* of Amendment first, and afterwards an *Actual Conversion*. The whole Performance of which is the true Gospel Repentance, which, next to an uninterrupted Obedience, is most Vertuous and Dear in *God's* sight.

Neither is there so much miserableness in Repentance, as you imagine. Indeed, if a Man never sinned, he would be Happier than the easiest Penitent; but the greatest Sinner, that has made his Peace

*Repentance not  
so troublesome  
as sin.*

with *God*, is infinitely more at ease, than the most thoughtless Unregenerate. 'Tis true, there is some trouble in Repentance, in conquering so many Evil Desires, and leaving off so many Ill-habits, but it is not comparable to those *Dreads* and *Horrors*, which are continually, in solitude, assaulting the mind of the most regardless Sinners, and give me leave to say of the *Atheistical Doubter* too. But when a Man, by sincere Repentance, has made his Peace with *God*, and is received into his *Favour*, he then receives the greatest Comfort that ever he felt before; so that Men, who have experienced it, have compared it to their Enjoyment of Ease, after a wracking Fit of *Gout* or *Stone*.

Nor is it any Disgrace to the Christian Religion, that its members sometimes have lived *lewd* and *flagitious lives*, before their *conversion* to Christianity, or before they were sincere Practicers of its *Doctrines*; but it is rather its greatest *Glory* and *Honour*, that the *Doctrines* it Teaches are of that Efficacy, and the Assistances of God's Holy Spirit, which it pretends to, are so great; that they can *overpower* the *stubborness* of a *perverse Will* and *inveterate Habits*, and make those eminent Examples of Vertue, who have so long been *beaten to Vice*,

And 'tis with as little *reason* that you *endeavour* to expose that *Daily Repentance*, which Christians in their Prayers do exercise.

*Daily Repentance reasonable.*

For whatever some Men, who pretend to sinless perfection, may say to the contrary; all sober Christians must own, that as long as they carry *Flesh* and *Blood* about them, they will be *subject* to a great many Imperfections and Failures, which God's Word, and their own Reason tells them *they ought to have avoided*; now 'tis the Duty of our Daily Prayers to Beg *pardon* of God for these Failures. I do not say that *good* Christians do every day commit *gross* and *known sins*, and as often repent of them and fall into them again; for a Man is not become a *good* Christian

stian, that has not fully conquered all Habits of Sin, and does not carefully avoid every Enormous Act of Vice ; But alas ! There is no *good* Christian but must allow, that he oftentimes through Ignorance or Inadvertency either does, or omits, that which his Conscience afterwards checks him for, and which he would not have done upon second thoughts ; there are so many Circumstances, which may occasion illness in a Moral Action, which the Wisest Man cannot always sufficiently consider ; there are so many cross Accidents befall us in the World, that we are oftentimes, before we are aware, Betray'd into some unjustifiable fits of Discontent and Peevishness, or causeless Anger ; our constant application to Worldly Business, gives our minds such a Tincture of Carnal Things, that sometimes we may chance to omit or make some indecent Excursions of Thought in our Devotion : Now these are really Faults, and which our Reasons and Consciences cannot Justifie, and, therefore, it is but *reasonable*, that as often as we find our selves to have fallen into them, we should make our Peace with God for these Deficiencies, and Beg his Grace for a greater vigilance for the future. And truly, if there were any state of absolute moral Perfection in this World, this were much a *better*

way to *obtain* it, than by an *arrogant* *pretence* to *perfection* in the mid'st of so many Failures unrepented of.

And I must further take the *boldness* to tell you, That the *sorrow* in the Duty of Repentance, which Christianity supposes is a very *rational* thing. Indeed I must needs own, that the *turning into a good course of Life* after a Vicious one, is the thing principally design'd by God, by enjoining the Duty of Repentance; but yet such is the Nature of Man, that *Repentance* can hardly possibly be *sincere*, without this *previous sorrow*. For Man is a Creature of *Flesh and Blood*, and made up of *Passions*, and what does not make some considerable Impress upon his Affections; makes little or none upon his mind. If a Man be fully satisfied in his *reason*, that he has carried himself Undutifully towards *God Almighty*, that he has offended a *Good and Gracious Benefactor*, by the most *unworthy Provocations*; That he has been guilty of the most Stupid Folly, by neglecting his *chiefest good*, and spending his time in *foolish insignificant Vanities*; That he has contracted to himself the *Infection* of an *Enormous Guilt*, and run himself into great Hazard of Everlasting Punishment: When a Man gives himself up to the

the *serious consideration* of all This, he cannot *but be* heartily sorry for bringing himself into these Unhappy Circumstances, and the more deeply the mind Reflects upon it, the greater will his Grief be ; and Men whose Affections are tender in other cases, if they are not so in *Repentance*, they do not seriously enough consider their *condition*, and are not so *sincere* in this Duty, as they ought to be. The hardest *constitution* of *soul* will, in some measure, be affected with this ; nor is it requisite that Men, whose affections are not the *tendereſt*, should be obliged to all those Sighs and Tears, which the more affectionate Souls abound with.

*Phil.* My next *Exception* is against a Doctrine you Christians espouse, which is that Mens Actions are influenced by the *Grace*, as you call it, *of God*. For my part, I think this looks like *Enthusiastical Cant* ; for we find within us a Power to do *Good* or *Evil* as we please ; but such a sort of supernatural Influence as you contend for, would make Men perfect *Machines*. If it be Mens Duty to do good, it is in their power to do it ; and therefore it would argue great injustice and Tyranny in *God Almighty*, to punish Men for not doing that, which he himself only can do in them. Besides, methinks this is a lazy irreligious sort of Doctrine, which de-



destroys *human endeavours*, and *good tendencies*, and puts all into the power of an irresistible Grace, which holds Men in fancy, they shall be saved, though they live never so Wickedly. Good honest Pagan Morality is much to be preferr'd to such sort of Grace. For what are Men the better, for sitting with their hands in their pockets and talking of Jesus Christ? For if the Doctrine of Jesus Christ be good for any thing, it is *good* to be Practiced; but no Rational Man can believe that Jesus Christ should give Men Laws to Observe, and that he should only observe them for them himself.

*Cred.* It is no Objection against the Reality of *Divine Grace*, that some Enthusiastical or Ill-designing Men have made great Mistakes about it, or made False Pretences to it. There is hardly any thing in the World so plain, but some Men have misconstrued; or or any thing so good but others have perverted. It is not my Business to defend those extravagant Notions, some Men have had, concerning irresistible Grace; but yet, I say, we have all the reason in the World to believe, That there is a Portion of God's Holy Spirit continually ready to Assist Christian Men in their Good Designs, and which does Co-operate with their Endeavours. That  
this

*Doctrine of  
Grace vindicated.*

this is a *Doctrine* of our *Holy Religion* is plain, not only from the *Promise* of our *Saviour* in sending the *H. Ghost*, but from the *Effects* of *Divine Grace*, frequently mentioned by the *Apostles*. *By grace ye are saved by faith, and not by works, lest any should glory,* Eph. ii. 8. 11. *Being confident of this very thing, that He, which has begun a good Work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,* Phil. i. 6. *I can do all things thro' Christ which strengthens me,* Phil. iv. 13. The *God of Peace, &c.* make you perfect in every good Work to do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight. 'Tis plain then that this is the *Doctrine* of our *Religion*, and 'tis as reasonable it should be so. For when we live in the *World of Sense*, where our *Affections* are all *Biaſſed* to carnal *Objects*, when we have strong passions towards *Pleasure*, and but weak inclinations to *Good*, unless *God Almighty* did vouchſafe us considerable measures of his *Grace*, we should be able to do nothing as we ought to do. So *Wonderful* is the corruption of *Human Nature*, and it has such a *Propensity* to do *Evil*, that I believe the worst Men do enjoy a share of *God's restraining Grace*, which does not let them be so very wicked as otherwise they would be. But in *Good and Regenerate Men* the Point is out of all doubt.

Let

Let a good Man, who has formerly lived an *ungodly* life, remember how irksome and impossible (almost) it *lookt* to him then, to resist a *Temptation*, which now he can do with Facility and Pleasure. This is not to be attributed only to an *habitual custom* of *Goodness*, for oftentimes *sincere Penitents* experience it in themselves, of a sudden, upon their first turning to God; they feel a *Total Renovation* of their *Minds*, and such a New Principle within them, as gives them a perfect *Abhorrence of all Evil*, and a *Disgust of their formerly most beloved Pleasures*. Nor can you account for *this* by fear or fancy, for how should these silly Passions be able to make such Noble Conquests over Mens Natures? The Best and Wisest Christians know and experience this to be true; and it rather shews a Degree of Spleen or Humour to deny so manifest a Truth, which Good Men are as sure of, as that they See or Walk.

But you do not fairly conclude, that it argues any injustice in God to punish Men for their sins, though God does not afford them his Grace. For all Men may have as great a share of God's Grace, as is necessary to their Salvation, if they sincerely ask it by Prayer; but there is no reason why God should be obliged to force the Influence of his

his *Holy Spirit* upon them whether they will or no. Nay, such is the *Goodness* of God, that he puts *good thoughts* very often into the minds of Wicked Men, in order to reclaim them, tho' they as often *ungraciously* Slight and Despise them. If they would take care to encourage and cherish those good Motions, God would go further with them, and give them Grace sufficient to conquer their Evil Habits; but when they refuse God's gracious offers at first, and shew no manner of willingness to amend their Lives, but industriously Stifle every good Thought, which is suggested to them; it is unreasonable to think, that God ought to force their Wills to Repentance, and to deal with them, as if they were meer *Machines*.

*Phil.* But methinks, *Credentius*, the Notion which the generality of you Christians have of the *Sacraments* is very odd, viz. That they confer Grace, as your Divines speak. Now, tho' we grant that Grace is given by the *H. Ghost*, yet it is not to be imagin'd that it should come by Eating Bread, or by being dipt in Water. This, the *Socinians* are Men of too good Reason to be unsensible of. And one of them Argues thus. The Word and Sacraments are sort of *Trinit. scheme of Religion, p. 24.* means, that Act not by any Natural Tendency of their own, nor by any harmony,

*harmony, suitableness or agreeableness to our powers faculties or natures; but by a Theurgical, Telestick and Mystical Operation; which is to say, they work upon our minds, as Spells, Charms, and Incantations. Let a Man in black sprinkle you with some of the Churches water, or give you a bit of Bread or a sup of Wine ter, over which he has pronounced the Wonder-working words prescribed in Mother-Churches Ritual, though by nature you are as bad as the Devil, you shall be qualified for Heaven. And this no less certainly, than by tying the Norman Knot, you may gain the Love of the Person you desire; or by other Devices recorded in the Learned Books of Magick, you may cause hatred, raise Winds, and do a Thousand other feats. Therefore, when St. Austin defined a Sacrament to be the outward visible sign of an inward spiritual Grace; the good Father should have considered, that this is the Definition of a Charm, and not of a Gospel Sacrament.*

*Cred.* I am heartily sorry that any, who pretend respect to our Blessed Lord, as the Unitarians do, should endeavour to expose any part of his *Holy Institution*; which can do no service to any but the *Infidels*; for no Body, that believes the *Orthodox Doctrines*, will ever be brought over to the Unitarian Principles by such shocking Railery; which

which makes all *good* Men but hate and abhor their Principles the more. But let us look a little into this Jest of a Comparison between Sacraments and Charms.

You find fault that a *Sacrament* is defined to be an *outward* and *visible* Sign of an *inward* and *spiritual* Grace. But, I pray, for what Reason? These Things in our Religion, which we call Sacraments, are some Holy Rites instituted by our Lord *Jesus Christ* the Founder of our Religion.

*Sacrament  
rightly defi-  
ned to be an  
Outward and  
Visible sign  
&c.*

They were called by the *Latin Church* *Sacramenta*, from the *Roman Sacramentum*, or Soldiers Oath or Engagement to his General. Now because of these Two Rites, viz. Of *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*, there was a mutual *Engagement*, or *Covenant*, between Christ and His Faithful People, therefore, the Ancients thought it *not improper* to call these *Sacraments* or *Engagements*. The *Sacrament of Baptism* was a *Covenant* by which we first enter into the Service of Christ; and agree with him to *obey his commands*, upon condition we may be Partakers of the Rewards His *Religion* promises; and in the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, we not only commemorate His Benefits, but receive fresh Assurances of His Promises, and new Affi-

*stances*



ons required for them. Now this being the nature of these *Two Performances*, where is the *Impropriety* of Establishing a Visible Sign? Is not there something like this in all sorts of *Covenants*? When the *Romans* made an Agreement with their Enemies, the *Fecialis* made use of such an Outward Sign, and throw'd a Stone violently out of his hands, wishing *if he acted Treacherously, that the Gods would deal with him as with that stone*. So *Gen. 15. 10.* Abraham makes a Covenant with God, by dividing the body of an Heifer, a she Goat and Ram into two parts. And to this Day we still find the like Ceremonies used in private Contracts; as in the Selling of Estates, the Delivery of Writings, in Matrimony, the Delivery of a Ring, or the Joyning of hands. Now what reason is there why our Saviour might not Ordain these outward visible Signs in these Two Federal Ordinances, as well as any Civil State generally does in theirs? These Outward Visible Signs usually carry a decent solemnity with them, as more engages Mens attention and respect, and helps to make a greater impression upon their Memory, than if there was only a bare verbal Agreement in such a Covenant. Besides, these outward visible signs are absolutely necessary in Divine Covenants, or in Stipulations between God and Men; for unless God did ordinarily

ordinarily and immediately converse with Men himself, there must be such an *outward and visible sign* to represent the *Stipulation of God* on his part. From all which, I conclude that you have no reason to find fault with the Outward Visible Signs in the Sacraments, but rather to admire the Fitness and Excellency of their Institution.

Nor is the *Institution* in these Covenants of Outward and Visible Signs more reasonable, than your *comparison* of them, with Spells and Charms, is void of Reason. For Spells or Charms are *Diabolical* or at least *Superstitious Practices* ; Difference of Sacraments & Charms. but neither of these can be charged upon the Two Sacraments instituted by our *Blessed Lord*. He had a power from Heaven to found the Christian Religion, and had Authority from thence to ordain what *Methods* were Fitting for the Propagating or Practicing it. Now when the Sacraments are founded on such *Divine Authority*, it is not very decent or civil to compare this pious Covenant with God, with the contract of Witches or deluded People with the Devil. Or if it becomes an Infidel to do so, the Socinian did a little forget himself, to talk after this rate, before he had declar'd himself openly to have come over into the Camp of the Unbelievers. Besides, is there any thing in our

Christian Sacraments like those idle *Superstitions*, by which the Devil Beguiles Witches and other simple People? Baptism is a *sober* and *ancient* Rite, which in all Ages out of mind, has *been used*, either for *Lustration* or in token of *Purgation from Sin*; or else to Institute *Proselites* into a New Religion. The *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* is but a kind of Commemoration Feast, which was used among the Jews; and *before* the Institution of their Religion, there was something like it, among the Eucharistical Sacrifices of the Patriarchs. Now when our Christian Religion has no more than these Two very Ancient and very Sober Rites, they are very improperly called by you and the *Socinians*, *Spells* and *Charms*: For they do in my mind bear very little Analogy to the Boiling together the Hair of a Wolf and the Juice of Hemlock, and such other *Diabolical Foolerys*, which Witches or Superstitious People use.

Well! But you may think them to be like Charms, because they are said to *confer grace* to the Partakers of them. You are under a Mistake, if you think that the generality of Christians do own, that the Sacraments do confer Grace by a Physical Power of their own, as the heat of the Sun produces Plants, or  
warms

*How sacraments confer Grace.*

warms-us ; or that Grace is *obtained*, as the *Papists* pretend, by the pure *Opus Operatum* of the Sacraments, by the *bare external receiving the Sacraments*, without due respect had to the *Worthiness* or other *Qualifications* of the *Receivers*. For these are Fancies which we Protestants cannot agree to ; for this Opinion would allow, that *Justification* would be the proper Effect of the Sacraments, which is only in Scripture attributed to *Faith* and *Holiness of Life*, when the Apostle expressly affirms *That outward Baptism does not save us, but only the Answer of a good conscience toward God*, 1 Pet. iii. 21. To say nothing of the ridiculousness of this Opinion, which makes such outward gross things penetrate to the soul, and produce a supernatural effect there ; nay, to confer the Divine Grace to senseless things ; for *Bellarmino* grants that, not only Men asleep may enjoy the Efficacy of Baptism, if Baptized then, but the Grace of God is conveyed to inanimate things ; and therefore the Christened Bells in that Church must have a share of it.

But though this *Opinion* be *Erroneous*, it does not follow, that <sup>Grace of Baptism.</sup> no Grace at all is conferred in the Sacraments, tho' they do not produce this Effect of themselves, or by their *bare Sacramental Institution*, yet they may

be made a means of it, by the Assistance of God's Holy Spirit, Co-operating with them, and the Faith of *Believers*. And if we credit the *Holy Scriptures*, it must be plain to us, that, by these *Sacraments*, we receive many supernatural Gifts of the *Holy Ghost*. Our Saviour tells *Nicodemus*, Discourſing to him of Baptiſm, that *That which is Born of the Spirit is Spirit*, Joh. iii. 6. And joyns all along together the being *Born again of Water and the Spirit*. And ſo the *Apoſtle*, Tit. iii. 5. puts together *The Waſhing of Regeneration, and the Renewing of the Holy Ghost*. And ſo throughout the whole VI. Chap. of the *Romans*, he ſhews *The great Advantages and Spiritual Graces which we receive by Baptiſm, that being Dead before, by this we may be enabled To walk in Newneſs of Life*, v. 4. That *The Body of Sin* by this is *deſtroyed*, that *henceforth we ſhould not ſerve Sin*, v. 6. And that by this *We are dead unto Sin, and alive unto God*, v. 11. By all which it is plain, that, by the Sacrament of Baptiſm, we do receive ſuch Advantage and Aſſiſtance of God's Holy Spirit, as may enable us to Encounter with the Wiles and Malice of the Devil, with the ſtrongeſt Temptations which the World or the Fleſh can preſent us with, and with the greateſt Difficulties we can meet with in our Chriſtian Warfare. This was ſo  
con-

Part III. *with a Theist.* 293

conspicuous in the Primitive Times, that many of the *Heathen Proselytes* found in themselves an Incredible Alteration, upon receiving this Sacrament; their Souls were in a manner framed anew, so that they seemed not to be the same Men they were before. Which makes *Lactantius* to Glory so of the Effects of Baptism. *Give us* (says he) *one that is Unjust, Foolish, and a Sinner, and in an instant he shall be Just, Prudent, and Innocent, with one Laver all his Wickedness shall be washed away.*

And so as for the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*, it is plain that by This we obtain Forgiveness of Sins, which is sealed by this Sacrament. *This Cup* (says St. Luke, xxii. 20.) *is the New Testament or Covenant in my Blood.* Or, as St. Matthew expresses it, *This is my Blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many, for the Remission of Sins.* By which it is plain, that Remission of Sins is received by partaking of this Sacrament; or else the Benefits of Christ's Blood are not conveyed in it, which is the least that can be understood by the Words *This is my Blood.* And many other great effects of Spiritual Grace our Saviour (*Joh. VI.*) attributes, to the Eating & Drinking his Body and Blood; That Men by this shall never Hunger, v. 35. *This*



*this is for the Life of the World,* v. 51. That without this Men *have no life,* v. 53. And again, *He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him,* v. 56. By which Expressions many of the Ancients thought, that the Elements in this H. Sacrament were the *Seed of Eternal Life*, in a proper sense, and which would make the Bodys of *True Receivers* spring up again from the Dust. But however, the least that can be understood by these Passages is, that God's Holy Spirit does, upon the due Receiving the Holy Sacrament, convey to us extraordinary Graces and Divine Assistances. And what reason, indeed, is there to think otherwise? For if God has promised to give his Holy Spirit to those that ask it, that he will provide us of Grace sufficient for us, even upon account of our ordinary Prayers, Why should we think he should not be inclined, to be more than ordinarily Liberal to our Requests, in that most solemn and intense Devotion, which he himself has particularly Instituted?

*Phil.* Next I Except against your *Religion*, for proposing such an odd unconceivable Doctrine, as the *Resurrection of the Body*. It is contrary to all Rules of Philosophy and common Sense, that a Body, which has once submitted to Natural Corruption, should again

gain reassume its pristine Form and Life. Nature then has neglected its *Ancient Work*, and is gone on to a New Draught of Operation; so that to produce the same thing again, is as absurd as to recall yesterday. Nay what jejune and operose Labour does this impose upon the Deity, not to call it an impossibility; to make him hunt out, through out all the Universe, the dispersed Particles of Dissolved Bodies, that are evaporated into the Air, tossed up and down in the Winds, dissolved in the Water, and roled down Rivers? And how is it possible that all Mens Bodies should arise again the same, when the same Matter has, in succession of time, composd it may be half a Score? The same Herbage which grows from the Corruption of Human Bodies is turned into the Nourishment of Animals, which become the Food of other Men. But what shall Canibals do, who live upon one another; in this case, at your Resurrection, one must want a Leg, and another an Arm, and some will hardly have a Finger left to themselves. Now this will make the Resurrection look more like a Surgeons Shop, or an Hospital, than a Kingdom of Glory. Indeed it may not want some probability to say, that when the Soul shall leave this Body, it may again have, after a time, some other Body or Ve-

hicles to move about in ; but that it should be forced to have the Old Rotten Particles picked up to be re-united to, is to me groundless and unconceivable Superstition.

*Cred.* It is the constant Fault of Men of your Persuasion, to disbelieve every thing that does any ways contradict the

*Possibility and Reasonableness of the Resurrection.*

ordinary Rules of Nature ; but if Nature be not God, but God governs Nature, I do not see any reason but that God may dispose of Nature, and dispense with her ordinary Laws as he thinks fit. There was a Time when Nature had none of these Laws, and, when God pleases, she may be dispossessed of them again. The present ordinary Laws of Nature, if they had been proposed to an Intelligent Being, before the Creation of the World, when they did not actually exist, would have been altogether as Shocking, even to an Angelick Mind, as any thing in the Doctrine of the Resurrection is to ours. What could an Angelick Nature, that had been acquainted with nothing but pure Spirit, think of a Material World ? What could such a simple Substance, that never knew any thing, but as uncompounded as it self, think of such a gross Bulky Substance as Body ? What Idea could it have of such

a Being, which was it self Finite, and yet every part thereof should be infinitely Divisible; that all those small *somethings* which composed the whole Bulk of Matter, should be infinitely distant from *nothing*? How Amazing would it be to that *Spiritual Being* to consider the Nature of *Corporeal Motion*; and when it had been us'd only to Intuitive Knowledge, How strange would be the Idea to it of Bodily Sense? Or how could it imagine that the first dark lumps of Chaotick Matter, should ever be framed into the Beautiful *Mechanism* of this *orderly World*? Most certainly, a *Witty Angel*, if he had the usual Pride of our *Unbelievers*, could have made as many *objections* against the *Creation* of a *Material World*, as They do against the *Resurrection* of a *Spiritual Body*; but notwithstanding these things were above the compass of the *Thoughts*, perhaps, of the most *Exalted Angels*, yet God *Almighty* did make such a *Glorious Material World*; and since we Christians are sure God has promised to raise such a *Glorious Body* out of our *Dead Ones*, we do steadfastly believe, He will *make good His Word*. If the Thing be not absolutely Impossible, there can be no Objection against it; for if it can be done, God has engaged His Veracity that He will do it. But it is not impossible to be done, and therefore it will

will be done. It would be impossible for us, and difficult, it may be, to any other finite understanding, to gather together so many dispersed *Particles of Matter*, but it would be no *difficulty* or *operoseness* to the *Deity*, for in their present Confusion, they all lie as distinctly in his knowledge, as if they were ranged into the most *Methodical Order*. *God Almighty* preserves them every minute in their Being wherever they lie; and to be sure, he that Conserves them Knows them. So that *God* can, at the *last Summons*, with as great Facility bring those dispersed *Particles* together again, as he united them in their first *Production*. Nay, one may easily imagine, that *God*, if he pleased, might impress a kind of Natural force upon these dissolved parts, to move to one another as readily as *Homogeneous Metals* do in a *Chymists Furnace*, or the Juices of the Earth, which are proper to nourish each Plant, are drawn together by it. What tho' we do not ordinarily behold a *Regress* to the *Ancient Form* after a *Privation*, or that things naturally do not return from Death to Life; must therefore *God* oblige himself for ever to the little Laws of this World: These *Rules of Nature* are only a Scheme drawn for a *World of Six or Seven Thousand Years* continuance; but after that, *God Almighty* strikes out

out new Lines of Providence, and prescribes to himself New Methods of *Operation*, the which are unknown to us now. And when you say it is as impossible to Revive such a *Dead Body*, as to recall yesterday, That is a great Mistake. For the parts of yesterday are not in Being, but the parts of a Dead Human Body are. All the parts of Matter are still *Permanent* after their *Dissolution*, whilst Time consists in *Flux* or *Succession*, the former part of which must have Perished before the latter has a Being. And 'tis to as little purpose that you object the *Food of Cannibals* and the *Interfering of one Man's Body with another*; for there is no one ever lived altogether upon Man's Flesh, and the very Liquids which are taken in with it, make no *inconsiderable Portion* of a *Cannibals Body*. Besides, we do not know the Dimensions of the *Spiritual Body*; that the *Corrupted Particles* of the Old one is the *foundation* of it, is plain by Revelation, but that all the *Gross Matter* which they formerly partook of, shall be taken in again into the *Angelick Body*, is not so certain. And tho' there should be a great deal of it lost by *Transmutation* from one Body to another; yet I am persuaded, there would be still abundantly enough remaining, to compose that *curious Isangelick Frame* of the *Glorified Body*. Therefore,



fore, I dont see any reason why the *Socinians* and their *Followers* should gratify the *Infidels* so far, as to allow the *Resurrection of a Body*, in general only, when the Scripture speaks only of the same Body, and when the first Christians were reviled for believing the *Resurrection of the same Body*; for if no more was meant by their Faith than the *Resurrection of a Body*, the *Heathens* might as well have exposed the *Pagan Divinity* of *Plato* and *Pythagoras*, who allow'd, That the Soul was again embodied after this Life; and the contumelious scattering the Ashes of the Christians Bodies into Rivers, was then no manner of *Exprobration* to the Christian Doctrine. Therefore, I say, when this is the Doctrine of the Scripture, and the constant Belief of the Christian Church, and is a thing so easie to conceive an Infinite Being to do; I do not see why Men should fall into Speculative or Fanciful Notions of a Resurrection, only because they may look a little more Philosophical.

*Phil.* There is another Doctrine of your Religion, which I cannot so easily subscribe to, and that is, when you Teach that there is a Devil, a certain great *Malicious wicked Power which is the Adversary of God.* Now 'tis not only very gross and irrational, but it is very

Celf apud  
Orig.p. 303.

*very impious to assert, that Almighty God being willing to do good to Men, is hindered from it by an Adversary. What! shall the Son of God be worsted by the Devil?* These are strange Contradictious Tales. If there were any Power, tho' never so great, that should stand in the way of Omnipotence, the Almighty Power would crush it into nothing; for what Created Power can be compared to an Infinite one? The whole United Power of Hell, and all your fancied Legions of Devils, would not be so considerable, if compared with That, as a swarm of Flies to Xerxes his Army.

*Cred.* You cannot pretend to expose the *Christian Notion* of a Devil, without taxing the *Opinion* of perhaps the whole World besides. The Ancients *Cacodæmons*, *Furies*, *Mali Genij*, &c. were but the same Thing in other Words, and *Pluto*, the God of Hell and Governour of Infernal Spirits, is much the same with the Scriptural *Satan*, the *Prince of Darkness*. The same notion of a great powerful Evil Spirit was got among the old *Persians*, under the name of *Arimanius*, and is still among the *Americans*, under the name of *Codovangi*; the like is to be found in the *Theology* of the *Chinese*. From whence I conclude, that this is a part of *Ancient Traditionary*

*Notion of a Devil all the World over.*

*ditionary Religion*, kept up among the diverse Nations of the World, and derived from the first *Progenitors* of *Mankind*; who, by the Unhappiness of their Fall, had especial Occasion often to re-mind their Posterity, of the Wicked Cause of it.

But why is the Character of a Devil so Difficult to be believed? I can see no reason but why there may not be depraved or fallen Angels as well as Men. If they have Free Will, as Men have, then they may abuse it; and that to the most *wicked* and *pernicious Purposes*, because of their extraordinary Knowledge. Because they know so much, since they want *Goodness*, they will be but the more *arrogantly Proud*; and that Pride, when they see themselves despised by God and good Angels, will render them *Spightful* and *Malicious*, and put them upon Mischieving every thing which God has a liking to. These Effects are Natural, and obvious to be seen in Wicked Men of Great Parts, who are slighted by their *Superiours*; but in fallen Angels such will Malice be much more refined and truly Devilish.

*Reasonable there  
should be Wicked  
spirits.*

But

But you mistake, when you think that Christians own, that the Devil is such an Adversary of God, that God cannot easily defend himself from him. God might, if he pleased, annihilate the Prince of Darkness, with all his Adherents, or sink them a Thousand times deeper into Damnation than they are; neither do we think that his Wiles are so great that he *circumvents* or *over-reaches* God Almighty.

*Devil does  
not hinder  
God.*

But though he *cannot* be too cunning for God, he may be for Men; and God *is not* obliged to over-power Man's Will when he will incline to the suggestions of the Tempter; it is sufficient that God gives him warning of the Danger from his Adversary, and affords him sufficient Portions of his Grace, but it is inconsistent with the frame of *Human Nature*, that God should forcibly bend his Will to Good, to rescue him from the temptation.

But further, there is no doubt to be made *but that* God does often make use of these little Artifices of the Devil, to the ruine of his Purposes, to further his own Wise Designs, for the *Punishment of Sin*, and for the *Government* of the World. He suffers some

*God overrules  
his Wiles by  
his providence*

Men

Men to be *tempted into great Sins*, that sometimes they may be roused, by the Shame or Guilt of them, into *Repentance*; he makes one Man's Wickedness chastise *that of another*, and occasions some to take Warning by the Heinous Crimes he permits others to fall into. And, *I doubt not*, but in the last winding up of Providence, it will be made appear, That the Devil's own Mischievous Wickedness shall fall upon his own Pate, and those Wiles, by which he thought to defeat the Designs of God, shall only tend but to make himself but the more Miserable.

*Phil.* The *Notions* you Christians generally have of Hell and Everlasting Punishments, do likewise very much disgust me. For my part, I look upon them, as those idle *Stories* of Lakes of Fire and Brimstone, of a Worm that dies not, and Mens roling about for ever in Rivers of Flame, to be only Bug-bear Tales of Designing Men, and which serve to scare silly ones. Of these *Stories* *Lucretius* has handsomely passed his Judgment formerly.

*Cerberus*

*Cerberus & Furia, tum vero & Lucis egenus,  
Tartarus horridos crucians faucibus æstus;  
Qui neq; sunt asquam nec possunt esse profecto.*

*Cerberus*, Furies, and the Gloomy Vault,  
Of *Tartarus*, belching out those Horrid  
(Heats;  
Things which are not, nor possibly can be.

These are only the Result of Mens idle  
Fears, and Superstitious Education.

*Hinc Acherusia fit stultorum deniq; Vita.*

Uneasie Guilt does make Mens Conscience  
(groan,  
And thus Fools come to Dream of *Ache-*  
(ron.

But to speak my mind freely, I must needs  
own, That there is some probability that the  
Soul shall be in a degree of Happiness, ac-  
cording to its Vertuous Behaviour in this  
X World,



World ; but those Endless Punishments in Merciless Flames, seem to impute such an Uncompassionate Nature and Bowel-less Cruelty to God Almighty, the Best of Beings, which a Charitable Man can hardly suppose of the *Worst*. And therefore, methinks the Reasoning of *Lucretius*, applied to this purpose, is very Just.

*Apparet Divum numen sedesq; Quietæ,  
Quas neq; concutiunt Venti, neq; nubila  
(nimbis  
Aspergunt, neq; nix acri concreta pruina  
Cana cadens violat : semperq; innubilis æther  
Integit & large diffuso lumine ridet :  
Sed contra nusquam apparent Acherusæ  
(Templa.*

The Gods we see, and Heavens Peaceful  
(Towers ;  
Vext by no rustling Winds or stormy  
(Showers :  
No Frost or Snow disturb the Happy Soil, }  
No lowring Clouds the Glorious Day |  
(defile, }  
But the pure Sky around with light does }  
smile : }

These

These Things we see, but then no Mortal  
(Eye,  
The *Acherusian* Temples can descry.

God is too good to Create any Creature which he will let be *Eternally Miserable*; and he is too *Just* to Punish a *slight, a Temporary Sin* with an *Eternal Punishment*. All his *Penalties* are *graciously design'd* to make Men *better*; but no Man can be *better'd* by being *infinitely tormented*.

*Cred.* It is none of my *Design* to *Vindicate* the Old *Mythological Stories* about *Tartarus* or *Hell*, where *Wicked Souls* were supposed to be *Punished*; though, I *doubt not*, but there was *some Truth* in the *bottom of them*, and that they were *grounded upon some Old Revelation*, handed down from the *time of the first Patriarchs*; Heathens No-  
tion of Hell  
came rather  
from Tradition  
than Fear. and not *owing to Mens Fears* or *Groundless Superstitions*. For I look upon *Conscience* or *Fear of Future Punishments*, to be a good *Argument* there are such *Future Punishments*, which all Men do fear; but I don't see any *Reason* why *Fear* alone should give them a *Being*.

For what all Men fear they have *Reason to fear*; for though a great many Men are lead by *Humour* and *Fancy*, yet what all Men do must have a *foundation* in *nature*, or *sound reason*.

Neither have you any *reason* to *find Fault with the Christian Description of Hell by Fire and Brimstone, &c.* For these expressions may, for ought we know, be only *Metaphorical*.

*Hell* being a most *Dreadful Place*, the *Torments* unknown and wanting a *Name*, it is *better illustrated* by those most *Horrid Pains* which we are acquainted with. Though there is *nothing unreasonable* if we take them in their *literal Sense*, for the *Bodies* being to be *Punished in Hell* as well as the *Souls*, there is *nothing* more suitable to produce a most *Raging Pain* in them than *Fire* and *Brimstone*; and the *dissolution* of the *Earth* being to attend the future *Judgment*, it is not improbable that the *Burning* of the *Nitro-Sulphureous Earth* may be a *Local Hell*.

But whereas you *Object* against an *Eternal Punishment*, *That it would be Unmerciful and Unjust*; When you consider *Mercy*, you will own, that the *Justice* and *Mercy* of *God* may be sufficiently *Vindicated* in this. For tho' *Mercy* be one of the *Attributes* of *God*, yet

yet his *Wisdom* and *Justice* are so too ; and his *Mercy* cannot in reason spare, when his *Wisdom* and *Justice* directs to Punish. So that the whole *Question* depends upon this, *Whether it be reasonable for God to entail an Eternity of Torments for Punishment of Temporary Sin.* And I Answer that he may, for these *Reasons* :

*Eternity of  
Hell Torments  
vindicated.*

1. Because it is not requisite that the Punishment, which is forewarned, should always be *proportioned to the Guilt*. For it is very Just in a *Legislator* oftentimes to make very severe Laws against *slight Crimes*, especially when the *Offenders* grow *numerous* and *insolent*. Now when we see Sinners are so bold and daring that they will venture upon Sin, when an *Infinity of Punishment* is denounced against it ; Can you think it *reasonable* that God should be obliged to have made the *Punishment* less severe, thereby to have given Wicked Men the *opportunity* to be more impudent. Indeed the case had not been the same if God had not given Warning of the *Grievousness* of the *Punishment*, but Punisht it after *according* to its exact *Intrinsic Merit* ; but when Men knew beforehand what they must trust to upon their *Disobedience*, it is no Injustice in God to in-

flit the Severity of his Laws, when it lay in Mens Power to have avoided it. And besides, that which makes such a Severe Legislation the more reasonable is, that God has annexed an *Eternity of Reward* to the *Obedience* of his *Laws*, as he has an *Eternity of Misery* to the *Disobedience*, so that the Infinity on one side does as much exceed all Pretence of Proportion as on the other; and Man has a Free Will to take either Choice; so that his own *Folly*, and not *God's Justice*, is to be blamed if he takes the Wrong.

2. I shall omit this *Argument* of the *Schools* for the *Eternity of Torments*, upon account, that the Sins, which they Punish, are against an *Infinite Dignity*, (though there is more in that Argument than the *Socinians* and *Remonstrants* will allow) and shall ground the Justice of God, in this Proceeding, upon the Natural Miserableness of Sin. God Almighty has fixed Eternal Laws that Vertue shall naturally tend to Happiness, and Vice to Misery. And whereas the Soul is Naturally Immortal, as long as it carries its Vice with it, it will be miserable. There is no time of *Purgation* from *Vice* but in this World, through the Merits of Christ, and the Benefits of the Gospel; and therefore, a  
Soul

Soul that goes out of it Unregenerate is Miserable for ever. It would be *Eternally Miserable*, if upon no other account, but because it will feel *Eternal Remorses* for Sin, and as having lost an Infinite Happiness. But yet further, Suppose that God, upon the Creation of the World, fixed settled Laws of his Providence in relation to Rewards and Punishments of Vertue and Vice, wherein he has determined that Sin should carry Men as naturally to such Punishments as frequent Debauches into Distempers and Indisposition of Body; Where would be the Injustice of God, to let Men for ever suffer the Effects which their Wickedness had brought them into? If you by Intemperance had Ruin'd the Constitution of your Body, Do you think that God Almighty's Justice or Mercy is concern'd to Rectifie it again by a Miracle? God Almighty's Mercy & Goodness were signalized enough in giving you a sound Constitution at first, which it was in your power to have kept, if you had lived as you ought to have done; but it is no manner of Injustice in God if he then suffers your Body to remain Sickly as long as it do continue in Being.

Now whereas God is not obliged to supersede his Natural Laws, in miraculously making a Body Well which has made it self



Sickly ; the case is the same in relation to those Laws and Methods of Providence, which are laid down as to Mens Souls, Vice can only Naturally throw the Body into Indisposition till Death : but the Soul being Naturally Immortal, it must be Eternally Indisposed by the same Laws. 'Tis one Scheme of God's Providence that Extrava-gant Intemperance shall make Men Sickly for a Mortal Life, and it is another, that Vice without a due Repentance shall make Men miserable for an Eternal one. And therefore, whereas the Order of Providence is, suppose, for Illustration sake, thus, That this World shall continue Six Thousand Years, and afterwards is to be burnt up, and to continue for ever in Flames of Fire, which may be, for ought I know, the Local Hell, that Men, by living a Course of Vertue, and according to the Rules of the Religion, God has prescribed, may get rid from the Miserys of this Burning World, and may be possessed of a Blissful State in another ; Where is the Injustice of God, if he does not Miraculously alter these Methods of his Providence out of Tendernefs to Men, who would not procure their own Happiness by the ordinary Methods he prescribed to them? As God is not obliged to alter the Laws of Sanity to make the Sickly Man better, but that

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Naturally he must continue under those Indispositions as long as he lives here; so neither is he obliged to make alteration in the other Providential Dispensations of another Life, but the Soul must take its most Miserable Lott there, which by its own Fault it has Plunged it self into.

3. And as to what you say as to God's Punishment only to make Men *better*; I do not take this to be any Objection against an *Eternity of Torments*. For tho' God does generally Punish Men in order to make them *better*, he does this only so long as they are capable of being made *better*: For when they become incorrigible this End must cease. Now 'tis true, that in this World God sends his *Chastisements* and *Afflictions* to this very purpose, thereby to make us *better*; because this World is a State of *Tryals* or *Melioration*, but in the other World the State of Things are changed, and the time of Probation is over; God has tried Men till they have plainly appeared incorrigible, and that 'tis to no purpose to try them longer.

And therefore the end of his Punishing Men must be then to display the Infinite Integrity of his Justice and Holiness, and that  
it

it is contrary to the Rectitude of his *nature*, to let Sin go Unpunished. Not but that Gods Goodness and Mercy has a share here too ; for by this Dreadful Punishment of Incorrigible Offenders he to all *Eternity* gives Examples of his Vengeance in Punishing Sin, and Rebellion against God, thereby to engage all his Creatures to a more hearty Love of God and a more ready fulfilling his Will for ever.

*Oracles of Reason.* pag. 122.  
*Spinoza Eth.*  
 par. 5. prop.  
 42.

*Phil.* My last Exception is against your Christian Doctrine of *Heaven*, where you tell us Men must be Rewarded for their Good Actions in a fine Glorious Place no body knows where.

But these are fond Notions fitted only for Vulgar and Mercenary People, who will do no *Good* but when they are hired to it ; but those are the generously Vertuous who are Vertuous for Virtue's sake, who choose to do good because it is Brave and Honourable, and not because they think they shall get by it. Therefore, methinks our *Deists* Religion is much preferable to yours, because it makes Men Vertuous upon a more Generous Principle, than yours does, which Encourages Men to Vertue only, in hopes of being Rewarded for it.

*Cred.*

*Cred.* There is nothing in the *Christian Doctrine* of *Heaven* and the *Glories* of another World, but what is very Sober and Rational, and agreeable to the Wisest Thought. We are Taught by our Religion, That we shall there enjoy Eternal Life, which is but very consonant to a *State of Glory*, which a frail Mortality would fully ; That we shall be Cloathed with a *Glorious* and *Incorruptible Body* ; whose Principle shall not be a *Living* or *Animal Soul*, but a *Quickening Spirit*, 1 Cor. xv. 45, and 49. (*i. e.*) not a Living Soul wanting nourishment as in this World ; but such a Quickenng Spirit as shall convey Life to the Soul without Eating and Drinking. What wiser Description can there be of a *State of Glory*, than to Represent it a Vacancy from all Pain and Dissatisfaction, *When God shall wipe all Tears from our Eyes, when there shall be no more Death or Sorrow of Crying, neither shall there be any more Pain*, Rev. 21. 4. And that the height of Fruition shall be in the Vision of God? *Blessed are the pure in Heart for they shall see God. We shall see him as he is*, 1 Joh. iii. 2. This is a True Rational Account of Future Happiness, and Worthy of God, and is not like the Idle Dreams of a Pagan Elysium,

or

or the Paradise of the *Alchoran* or the *Talmud*.

But to speak a Word or two in Answer to your Taxing us with want of Generosity in doing Good for the hopes of Heaven. Now, for my part, I cannot see but that it is altogether as Generous to do Good for God's sake, as for Vertues sake. For what is Virtue abstracted from God and Religion, but only an Empty Name? He that does Good for God's sake, or because God has commanded him, does it most certainly for Vertues sake too; that is because it is agreeable to the Truest Reason, for we are sure that God commands nothing but what is Wise and Good. Oh! But we have an Eye upon our own Happiness likewise when we do it, and therefore do not do Good for Vertues sake. I can understand nothing by your doing Good for *Vertues sake*, but only the doing a Thing because it is Wise and Rational; Now what can be more Wise and Rational than in all our Actions to have an Eye to our Chief Good; which if we Neglect, we Act neither Wisely nor Rationally. We Act Wisely and Charitably to our Neighbour, and are Beneficent to our Friends, because our Reason tells

us, That we were not Born for our selves, but that we ought to Distribute our Assistance, as far as we can, in our Generation.

And is it not as Wise and Rational to Provide for our own Happiness too in another World, by duly Worshipping God; and doing as he has commanded us? To take care only of others and thus desperately to neglect our selves, is Madness and Folly, and not to Act for Vertues sake; or Agreeably to Reason. But the Truest Reason tells us, that we ought to consult our own Happiness when it is not Prejudicial to others, and the desire of it does not degenerate into Selfishness, or a Vicious Self-Love. For Reason tells us, That God has not implanted this Principle of Self-preservation or Self-love in us for nothing; and therefore, we must conclude that we Act very Rationally when we Act in order to our own chief Happiness, which is in no wise Prejudicial to other Mens. Now this is the Truest Way of Vertuous or Rational Action, because it is to Act agreeable to the Reason of God. But your way of Acting according to Vertue or Reason, is oftentimes according to Fancy, or the Whimsical Reasoning of some

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*Opiniators*, who are continually advancing New *Hypotheses* in *Morality*, as they do in *Physicks*, and drawing New Schemes of Vertue or Vice, as their Spleen directs them. This is not to follow Reason or to Act for Vertues sake, but to dance after all the *Ignes Fatui* of a Speculative Brain.

But, after all, what is this great Pretence of these Sett of Men to Act for Vertues sake, which is so brave and generous? Why, it is only to do a Reputable Action to be admired and praised, which is nothing else but Unregenerate Pride. Such Men will rarely do a Good Action in the Dark, which is like to come to no ones Knowledge, or if they do, it is with such a sort of inward Haughtiness, that spoils all the Goodness of it.

Therefore, pray, *Philologus*, leave off all these Heathen Principles, which are good for nothing, but to make Men Insolent and Contemptuous; and Learn to do Good for God's sake, and your own Souls sake; and this will make you Better and Happier than a few empty glittering Notions of the Bravery of Vertue, which the Philosophers of Old, for lack of Revelation, wer forced to Content themselves with.

Phil.

*Phil.* I am sorry we cannot make an end of our Conference this Morning, for Dinner Time comes on ; and I must bespeak your Company, Good Sir, to take a Dish of Meat with me to Day, and after Dinner we may Dispatch that part of our Dispute which remains behind.

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*F I N I S.*

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## The ERRATA.

**P**Age 8. line 5. read *shews*. p. 9. l. 6. r. *which a Man*.  
 p. 9. l. 16. for *and he* r. *he*. p. 16. l. 22. for *and says* r.  
*says*. p. 23. l. 12. r. *but that*. p. 31. l. \*22. for *personally* r.  
*naturally united*. p. 35. l. 29. r. *mulieris*. p. 71. l. 10. r. *or*  
*his reason*. p. 71. l. ult. dele *Kings and Princes shall be of her*.  
 p. 82. l. 4. for *iko' falsly*. For, &c. r. *iko' falsly for*, p. 92.  
 l. 16. r. *Sibylline*. p. 121. l. 19. r. *had been so perfectly*.  
 p. 147. l. 15. r. *other Doctors*. p. 153. l. 9. r. *the Evange-*  
*list*. p. 154. in the margin, for *Philosoph*. r. *Philostr*. p. 157.  
 l. ult. for *owned it* r. *owned them*. p. 160. l. 7. for *Impostures*  
*r. Impostors*. p. 171. l. 2. for *the Church* r. *their Church*.  
 p. 171. l. 16. r. *and his Apostles*. p. 174. l. 17. r. *yet if*.  
 p. 204. l. 28. for *Faicus* r. *Fairus*. p. 219. l. 22. for *Boats*  
*r. Boat*. p. 232. l. 35. r. *Tewmēgia*. p. 237. l. 12. r. *quæq;*  
 p. 273. l. 6. r. *exemplar*. p. 305. l. 3. r. *usquam*. p. 306.  
 l. 12. r. *violat*.

